The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

John W. Meister:

SERMON PLANNING

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By Harold W. Ruopp

THE AUTHORITY OF

WHERE is the modern Christian preacher to ground his authority? At the very outset, a distinction needs to be made between an authoritative and a dictatorial type of ministry. In his Yale Lectures, John Henry Jowett warned against "the peril of dictatorialism." He says: "The authoritative messenger is clothed with humility, the dictatorial messenger is clothed with subtle pride. One walks on stilts, the other 'walks in the fear of the Lord.' The dictatorial is self-raised, the authoritative comes 'from above.' "

Of one thing we may be sure, said Jowett: "If we speak dictatorially we shall be only combatants; if we speak authoritatively we shall be saviors." People are led out of bondage neither by moral cowards on the one hand nor by spiritual dictators on the other. The redemption process awaits those who, while they are aflame with the Spirit of God, can never forget the manifold conditionings of the people to whom they would give the divine fire.

If a distinction is necessary between preaching authoritatively and preaching dictatorially, an equally important distinction must be made between an external type of authority and an intrinsic one. The authority of externalism is that which attaches itself to an office as such. Such, for example, was the authority of the Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' day. Such, to a considerable degree, is the authority of the pope, whose bulls and encyclicals get their power among large groups of people because of their conception of his office as Christ's vicar on earth. Such, too, was the authority which attached to the Protestant ministry in days gone by. The minister held a unique position in his parish and community. He was the "parson"—the chief person. Because of his position in the church, the traditions he represented and his own relatively advanced training, he spoke with authority.

For better or for worse, however, the authority of externalism is going; indeed in wide areas and in the lives of millions of people it has already gone. Men today will not listen to anyone simply because of his office, even though he be pastor of First Church with its Gothic cathedral, its staff of paid workers and its 3,000 members.

The Old Authority Is Going

The reasons for the disintegration of the old authority are so many and so familiar that they need only be named. Increased education among large groups of people; the dissemination of information by newspapers, books, radio and television; the large body of scientific knowledge which has been brought within the reach and understanding of every layman who wants it; the encrustation of vital religion in untenable theologies and lifeless liturgies; the disrepute into which the church has fallen among large groups of people because of its impotence in the face of grave social issues; the endless denominational divisions—these have all contributed to weakening the authority of the church and its ministry.

Fortunately, however, there is another type of authority to take its place, an authority more powerful and more valid than the other because it is self-authenticating. It stands in its own right and on its own feet. It needs no crutches to help hold it up. Such was the authority of Jesus. We need constantly to remind ourselves of the fact that he held no office in the institutional religion of his day; he was not a priest or a rabbi; he was not bishop of the Nazareth area nor even assistant minister of the Central Church of Jerusalem. He was a carpenter, who surrounded himself with tax-gatherers and men whose hands smelled of fish. And yet, significantly enough, we are told by the author of the First Gospel that he taught "as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

The kind of authority of which we are thinking cannot be handed over to us ready made. It is a conquest, not a bequest—an achievement, not a gift; and each of us must win it for himself. As I see it, it will rest upon at least three great foundation stones.

There is, first of all, the authority which is born of a comprehensive knowledge and insight. It is the authority which results when one is conversant with the general trends in many areas of

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A distinguished Methodist pastor discusses the sources of the preacher's authority

THE MODERN PREACHER

human thought and is acquainted with the most significant conclusions in all the major fields of investigation. It would seem then that the preacher, if he is to speak authoritatively to a confused and groping world, must adopt three distinct, yet supplementary, attitudes. The first is the *scientific* attitude. The essence of scientific-mindedness is objectivity. Its watchword is, "Get the facts regardless of your own interests." But mere facts, interesting as they may be, are not enough. Lucius Bugbee somewhere tells this pertinent story.

> One morning, a graduate student in one of the departments of science at the state university called me on the telephone and asked if he might come over to see me at once. Shortly afterward he burst into my study and, without any word of introduction, said with considerable emotion: "Can you tell me what it is all about, this business of living? What are we here for?" Then he added: "Don't give me any more facts. I am fed up on facts. I want meanings and values!"

So do we all!

A second attitude must therefore be coupled with this first one. We may call it the *philosophic* attitude. He who has it stands on a high mountain-top and weaves together the facts and the truths he has discovered in the various departments of human thought and investigation into a systematic whole. Wanting to help others "see life whole," he realizes that it is necessary that he himself first "see life whole." One of the greatest of all tragedies is fragmentary thinking, fragmentary living, fragmentary preaching. We preachers, above all others, need to save ourselves from the tyranny of segments.

Seeing Life Whole

The third attitude may be called the *religious* one. For the Christian preacher the scientific and philosophic attitudes are not enough. It is incumbent upon him to go a step further: to interpret the facts and truths he has discovered, and whose synthesis he has perhaps effected, in terms of the teaching and example, the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ. That function is uniquely his. It is that which sets him off from all others. "I preach Christ, and him crucified," must everlastingly be the burden of the Christian ministry if it is to fulfill its highest destiny. He who does it, not as an affectation but because he has caught something of the radiant and heroic, the winsome and redemptive quality of Jesus in his own life, will be able to preach with power and authority.

That thought brings us easily and naturally to the second great foundation stone upon which our authority is to be based; namely, religious certainty and deep conviction. It is the authority born of the certainty that we are fellow workers together with God. It is the authority which comes from the profound conviction that at the heart of the universe there is an eternal goodness, one which is not finally indifferent to truth and beauty and goodness on the one hand nor to injustice and ugliness and evil on the other.

Jesus is reported by the author of the Fourth Gospel to have said to Peter, "Feed my sheep"—a good charge, I take it, for all the true successors of that great disciple. But sheep cannot be fed if the shepherd has no food, nor guided if he himself has no sense of direction, nor saved from the abyss into which their foibles may tumble them if he has no courage, nor introduced to the unseen Spirit which broods over the universe if he himself has not felt the stirring of that Spirit in his own soul.

Preaching Is Witnessing

Preaching on its lowest level is enunciating the confusions and uncertainties of which everyone is already more or less conscious. But at its best, *preaching is witnessing*. It is telling what we have found that makes for creative living, and if possible, *how* we have found it. If the spoken word fails us, then the light in our eyes and the radiance in our souls will tell all men that we have caught the divine fire. Against "the word made flesh" there is no argument. It carries its own sufficient proof of what it has on the inside.

That religious certainty and assurance will in turn give birth to convictions which will affect mightily the society in which we live. Whenever you mix a conviction—not simply an opinion or an idea or an emotion or a prejudice, but whenever you mix a conviction with a man or a man with a conviction, something is bound to happen. He is filled with vigor and vitality. He goes out into the world of men not only a vindicator of, but a volunteer for, the truth as he has come to know it. Then he speaks with authority, not in innocuous platitudes; and people will respect him and listen to him—or, what is so often the case, pay him a backhanded compliment by calling him a fool.

Finally, there is the authority which always is born of a deep understanding of and sympathy with people. The man who understands me and sympathetically (or even better, empathetically) enters into my own experience, by that virtue alone has a hold on my life from which I cannot escape.

I once put this question to one of my Sunday morning congregations, "What one thing, above all others, do you wish your minister to have?" Some four hundred laymen wrote me an answer. When a summary was made of the replies, it was found that the single word "sincerity" appeared most frequently. Second was "understanding"—understanding of people, of their manifold and complex problems and needs, of the "life situations" in which they find themselves involved.

I am coming increasingly to regard social imagination as one of the primary requirements of the Christian minister. By "social imagination" I mean the willingness and ability to put yourself in another man's place and to look at life through his eyes. I do not mean putting yourself in another person's place and then saying what you would do if you were there. When one is really using his social imagination, he raises the all-important question, "Why is it that so-and-so thinks, acts and lives the way he does?" It may be that his liver is off-color or his endocrine glands are not functioning properly; it may be that he is suffering from an unfortunate childhood conditioning; it may be that he is unhappily married; it may be that he is overwhelmed by a sense of insecurity or futility. Whatever it is, before I pass final judgment upon him, I need to know what it is—and then I won't pass judgment! There are many notable books to help us here, but there is finally no substitute for intimate, first-hand knowledge of as many people as possible. Pulpit work and pastoral work are inseparably bound together. I for one cannot concur in the opinion that "pastoral calling is ringing doorbells and palavering with surprised housewives"—not pastoral calling at its best. If we are to do life-situation preaching—the only preaching, as I see it, that will make our pulpits thrones of power—then we must know life *at its deepest levels*. What will it profit a man if he gain a world of knowledge and then not know the people to whom he would give it?

It may be trite, but it is none the less true to observe that the pastor who is interested in people, understands the deep places of their hearts, cares for them above everything else, has already established an authority over their lives. Let people feel that their problems are his problems, that their joys and sorrows, successes and reverses are his special province, that he wants them for their own sakes and not simply to swell his congregations for the sake of conference statistics, and they will listen to him and to the God he represents with real attentiveness.

Beatitudes for the Student of the Scriptures

By Ansley Cunningham Moore

Sixth United Presbyterian, Pittsburgh, Pa.

BLESSED are the students who get the author's point of view, for theirs is the kingdom of understanding.

Blessed are they that listen for the Voice of God as they study, for they shall be filled with spiritual qualifications.

Blessed are they that study with attention and intention, for they shall inherit God's truth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after the plain grammatical sense of the words of Scripture without reading into them ideas which are not there, for they shall be filled with the light of those who do not bend Scripture in any direction.

Blessed are the students who, in studying the prophets, see that the *chief* interest of these ancient preachers is with their own people and times, for they shall obtain an intelligible understanding of prophecy.

Blessed are the students who approach the Bible as a library, and study it as they do any other book, for they shall see its varied literary forms and the better understand its message.

Blessed are the students who after thorough and careful study do not accept a view which does not commend itself to them, for they shall be called the children of independent thought.

Blessed are they which are persecuted because they see a progressive revelation of God and a growing response from man in the Scriptures, for theirs is the kingdom of light.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for His sake and for the sake of taking seriously not only the theological teaching of Scripture, but also the ethical precepts.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.

You are the salt of the earth when you go beyond the personal application of the teachings of Scripture to its implication for group life.

You are the light of the world when you are not content to determine the meaning of Scripture for the ancients only, but seek God's Word as revealed in the Bible for yourself and your generation.

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A Christmas Sermon

The Known God

By A. Gordon Nasby

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. John 1:14.

A MISSIONARY's son came to America for his advanced education. Over his desk he always kept his father's picture. Shortly before Christmas one of his teachers visited him. During their conversation the teacher asked the missionary's son what he wanted most for Christmas. The student replied, "I want my father to step out of this frame." It would be no exaggeration to say that throughout history man has had a similar longing that God might reveal himself.

In Jewish worship this hope was repeatedly voiced in the Amadiah benediction: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God and the God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the great, mighty, and revered God, the most revered God, who bestowest loving kindnesses and possesseth all things, who rememberest the pious deeds of the Patriarchs, and in love wilt bring a redeemer to their children's children for thy name's sake." Christmas for Christians is the celebration of the fulfillment of this prophecy and hope. John the apostle unmistakably confirms the realization of this hope when he says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." John saw in Christ the Incarnate God. The chief cause for rejoicing at Christmas should be that God has become the Known God.

A friend who is minister of one of America's largest churches has related to me how a member of the Jewish faith became interested in Christianity. After attending the services at the church where he ministered, the Jew sought out my friend. After several conferences no really definite progress seemed to be made, and the Jew came one evening saying flatly: "Tonight I decide one way or the other. When I walk out the door, I will either have decided to become a Christian or will close the door on Christianity forever." During the conversation that followed, the inquirer seemed to be little convinced until my friend declared, "Christianity is not simply the acceptance of a set of ideals and teachings—it is surrender to a person." The idea almost startled the Jew, who exclaimed, "That appeals to me!" Before the appointment was over, the Jew had decided to become a Christian and to join the church.

The church would undoubtedly have a greater appeal and accomplish more if it became fully aware that Christ is its center. We are easily distracted from the Christ who has made God known.

A Changed World

The majority of us, who have been born into the household of faith, forget the great implications of the Incarnation. We have accepted the Christmas observance with familiarity and we thrill but lightly to the idea of God becoming known among us. We now receive in a matter-of-fact way, news that would have thrilled the saints of Simeon's day.

The world since the first Christmas is a changed world. For all its heartache, wars and deep wrongs, this is a better world with Christ. Few of us would dare wish the past 19 centuries to be stripped of the influence of Christ. Jean Paul Richter once considered such a thought in a dream. He dreamed he was in a churchyard at midnight and was startled by the reappearance of Christ, who was on the verge of complete despair after having surveyed the heavens. Christ in Richter's dream came back saying, "There is no God. We are all orphans. We have no Father." For Richter, all grew dark and terrible. Presently a great bell began to swing and toll the last hour of time. At this the fabric of the universe began to shatter. Then Richter woke up. He says his soul wept for joy that it was only a dream and he could still worship God.

A world without God would indeed be a place where pessimism would reign. But a world where God was not revealed even though men believed in him would be only slightly less difficult.

Canon Streeter, Dorothy Wilson tells us, was once passing by night through a large factory town. The train pulled up on the outskirts and he found himself fascinated by the sight of the sparks shot up into the dark sky by the great factory chimneys. It came to him that this was a parable.

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"These sparks are to me," he said, "evidence of titanic furnaces hidden from my sight. They are more than evidence. They are, as it were, tiny samples from which I can deduce something of the very nature of the hidden fire. Just so the greatest personalities of our race show us something of the nature of the Reality hidden behind the material universe. Like sparks from an unseen furnace, there have flashed up the souls of Shakespeare, or Michelangelo, the minds of Newton, Darwin, Einstein . . . and, among the sparks is one like the Morning Star—the personality of Jesus Christ."

God Takes the Initiative

God's mercy, it has been said, broke upon the world with the coming of Christ. In Christ we have the evidence of a God who takes the initiative. The theological implications of this are indeed very great, but one does not need a profound understanding of theology to know that Christ's coming has made a difference for our present life. The simplest knowledge of the founding of our hospitals and institutions of mercy discloses that Christ has been largely responsible. Governments have been made just and humane by him. Homes have been ennobled by his spirit. These are obvious facts. If you remove from literature, music and art the influence of Christ, you impoverish each.

Maude Royden, the great English woman preacher, recently related how in 1928 she was told of the dreadful sufferings of the wounded Chinese soldiers who had been brought back from some battle between the then powerful war lords, laid out on the station platform and left there throughout a cruelly cold autumn night. Many of them were found dead in the morning. The others were removed to hospitals. She asked eagerly who took pity on them at last, and was told that it was a philanthropic Buddhist society. She supposed her interlocutor read her feelings in her face, for he said: "You wish it had been a Christian society?" and she admitted that she did. He said, "You needn't mind—it is only the impact of Christian teaching on Chinese life that has created a Buddhist philanthropic society at all."

There is also the familiar challenge of Lowell to the effect that if anyone could find a place ten miles square on this earth where womanhood was honored and the highest concepts of justice and love cherished, and yet the place could be proved not to have been influenced by Christ, he would abandon his faith.

Not Security but Peace

A Christmas observance at a time when the world is upset with wars and rumors of wars may seem incongruous. The angels' announcement of peace may be a little difficult to grasp. This, however, is due to our confusing security with peace. If the meaning of the angels was that security would be brought by Christ's coming, the news would appear totally irrelevant to our time. Josiah Royce declared that security is the one thing we can't have. The Incarnation did, however, bring peace to the inward man, peace to the heart, peace to the follower of Christ in the assurance that God not only rules this world but that Christ reveals God as a God of love who has compassion on his children.

During the First World War, J. Middleton Murray became so discouraged that, as he says, he considered climbing on one of the lions in London's Trafalgar Square and shooting himself. Then occurred the loss of his wife, the brilliant Katherine Mansfield, who died in his arms. At this, however, the room was filled with the presence of God and Murray experienced a strange and wonderful peace. Later he wrote to the effect that it was Jesus that opened the way for his securing poise and peace.

Through Christ we have come to know what God is like. Religion has often pictured God in terms of an awful and vengeful monster before whom man must tremble and quake. Jesus gave us the revelation that God is a God of love. Christ did not simply tell the parable of the ninety-and-nine; he made manifest for us this shepherd-love of God and made it natural to think of God as a loving God. On the cross we have the highest fulfillment of this truth.

The Incarnation also lends force to the belief in the providence of God, for Christmas tells man he is in the thought of God and God did not intend to forget him. God has not left us alone; he has visited his people.

Christmas, Good Friday and Easter

The Incarnation also put optimism into history, for Christ's birth is a portent of victory. A Christless world would be a pessimistic world, for it would have no future. Nineteen centuries have not dimmed in the least the relevancy of Christ and his word. This should help us recall that Jesus himself said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away."

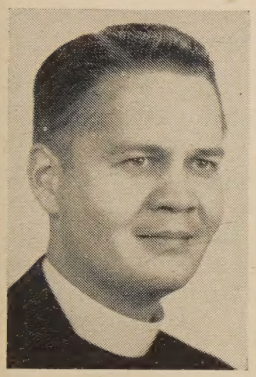
What happened the first Christmas cannot be understood if it is dissociated from what followed. Good Friday and Easter must be linked with the Incarnation. For this reason we have made it a custom to save the main trunk of the Christmas tree which stands in the nave of our church, to fashion it into a rude unadorned cross on Good Friday and to bank it with flowers on Easter Sunday. Thus we hope to remind worshipers of the close relation between the incarnation, the death and the resurrection of Christ. For had Jesus not gone to the grave and risen again, Christmas itself would be robbed of its meaning. Christmas then, it may be said, is fulfilled by Easter. Considering this, Christmas reveals ultimate truth about life because it deals with man's purpose and destiny.

Conningsby Dawson tells of two crucifixes he saw in a wood in France during the First World War. One lay smashed and fallen, with part of a hand lying in grotesque irony; the other, farther in the wood, was untouched, and to this weary men dragged themselves to worship and die.

What began in our world on the first Christmas is the truly great thing that has happened in our world throughout its long history. If Mary, pondering in her heart, could suddenly have been transported to one of the great cathedrals of our time to be informed they were built to worship the Christ, if she could listen to some of the great music composed to honor him, if she could be taken down the corridors of modern hospitals and be reminded that these were the result of the enlightenment brought to men's consciences through her Son, well might she marvel at the goodness of God. And so ought we!

The story is told of a famous actress for whom a benefit performance was to be given at a large theater. The actress herself came to the theater but there were no unsold seats. When they were about to turn her away she exclaimed, "But I am the actress!" At this, they arranged to let her stand in the wings and watch the performance being given in her honor. Is this not how we often treat Him? Many generations have passed into silence, praying and longing to know what we know. The Word has become flesh and we have seen his glory—a glory lighting up the pages of nineteen centuries of otherwise tragic history.

God has become known. And in response we have a debt to honor and serve him. To worship Jesus as God is worshiped, to trust him as God is trusted, and to owe him what we owe God alone —this, says James Denney, is the essence of Christianity. We cannot do better at Christmas than to judge ourselves by this definition and commit our lives to fulfilling its implications.



For the New Year

Resolutions vs. Revolutions

By G. Edward Knapp

Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. John 2:5.

THE dictionary defines resolution as the process of resolving, and revolution as the act of revolving. What a world of difference that change of one little letter makes! And what a difference would be made in the world if that one little letter were changed in many people's lives! If all the people who today are content with resolving would suddenly begin revolving—that is, doing things, changing wrongs into rights instead of merely passing resolutions to the effect that such changes would be nice—ah, what a brave, fine world we would have then.

Now don't misunderstand me. Resolutions are fine; they belong to the indispensables of life. For except a dream or vision is translated into resolution, it will never see the light of real life. Every great accomplishment has been at one stage or another in its development nothing more than a resolution in some person's heart. But we cannot change that sentence around and say that every good resolution in someone's heart has eventually become a great accomplishment. That is where the trouble lies.

Suppose—to get this straight right at the outset —we compare the history of a great accomplishment to the history of, say, an apple. We all know the story of an apple. First it was a seed; then the seed became a flower; and finally where the blossom once was, the fruit appeared. From seed to blossom to fruit—three stages. Similarly, in the development of a significant achievement three stages may be distinguished. The first or seed stage is when the achievement-to-be is only an idea, existing in the mind as a dream or a goal. When the idea moves from the mind to the heart, it becomes a purpose or a resolution. The seed becomes a blossom—that which was only intellectual, of the mind, now becomes volitional, of the will. But still there is no fruit. That involves another step—from the heart to the hand, from the realm of volition to the realm of action. From idea to resolution to achievement. From mind to heart to hand. From intellectual to volitional to actual.

Now some ideas, not very sound or healthy from the outset, are destined to a tragic end before they ever really get under way. They never even reach the blossom stage—they never become even resolutions. They remain merely idle dreams, until they die altogether. Many people's lives are cluttered with such lifeless and totally unproduc-

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tive seeds. They dream about and wish for the kind of world in which they would like to live. They have ideas as to what that world should be like, and other ideas as to what must be done if such a world is to be brought into reality. But as for actually resolving to do something about it—they never get that far. They leave that to someone else. And they continue to live on, totally unproductive, in their own private dreamland. We call them the idle dreamers, the wishful thinkers, the armchair generals.

But some ideas are a little hardier—or rather the folks who entertain them are of sterner stuff. They stir people out of complacent thinking into militant and aggressive willing. The idea becomes a purpose and the dreamer becomes a resolver. And that is all to the good. For when a man who thinks he sees something to be done actually resolves to do it, he is well along the way to doing it. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and you cannot eat blossoms. The blossoms is a step nearer to being an apple than is the seed, but it is still just as useless to the hungry man. A life-saver on the end of a 20-foot rope may reach nearer to the drowning man than a life-saver on the end of a 10-foot rope, but if he is 25 feet away it doesn't make much difference to him whether he is missed by 5 feet or by 15 feet. In his case a one-inch miss is as good as a mile.

Private Dreamlands

You cannot feed a hungry man on blossoms. Nor can you feed a spiritually starving world with pious and well intentioned resolutions. And that, I am afraid, is what too many of us have been trying to do. We substitute blossoms for fruit, resolutions for deeds. You know it is so much easier to pass a resolution declaring all men equal than it is actually to treat someone of a less favored social or economic position as an equal. It is so much easier to resolve to be good than it is actually to begin being and doing good. By the 15th of January, I wonder how many perfectly excellent resolutions made on New Year's Day are already broken. It has been well said that the highway to hell is paved with good intentions. That is the great tragedy—that so many promising blossoms never bear fruit, that so many good ideas perish somewhere in between the resolution and the achievement stage.

That is why I have selected as our text this morning those well known but too often unheeded words of Mary, spoken in connection with the performance of Jesus' first miracle. Let's recall the story briefly. Jesus was a guest at a wedding feast. The supply of wine became exhausted. Mary, his mother, turned to Jesus and said—and by the very simplicity of her remark demonstrated her faith that he would do something about it—"They have no wine." No petitioning, no pointing out what should be done, simply a statement of need.

For the moment, Mary's faith did not seem to get her very far. "Woman," said Jesus—not harshly, but certainly at least distantly—"what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come." Much as he loved his mother, Jesus' love for his heavenly Father came first. His first duty was to fulfill God's will. Nothing, not even his deep love for his mother, could interfere with this. She, very likely, expected her Son, as the promised Messiah, to re-establish the great kingdom of David and Solomon. This particular occasion may have appeared to her an excellent opportunity for taking a first step in that direction. But Jesus knew that this was not to be. He was, indeed, to become the King of kings and the Lord of lords, but not in the manner that Mary, perhaps, expected. Hence his "Mine hour is not yet come." He was to wear a crown, but first he must bear the cross. The day was coming when Mary would know her Son as the resurrected and risen Savior, but first a sword must pierce through her very soul. Before she was to know the resurrection she must witness the crucifixion.

A Cross before a Crown

But Jesus' somewhat distant reply did not discourage this woman of great faith. Often she was puzzled about her Son. Many were the mysteries she pondered in her heart concerning him, but never did she lose faith in him. Even his failure to take immediate action upon her suggestion did not deter her. In full confidence that he would do something about the matter she turned to the servants standing by and directed, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

Mary gives us a lesson on how to act. Unless we *do,* we cannot become accomplishers. Too many resolutions are adopted by men, both individually and corporatively, which never advance beyond the resolution stage, because what is in the heart never reaches the hand. One sage has said, "Actions speak louder than words." Another has said, "What you are and what you do speak so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." How true! If the Christian church, after addressing her prayers to God, is content with passing resolutions against war or against racial prejudice or against economic exploitation, without acting upon those resolutions, great shall be the fall thereof.

Such resolutions require follow-ups in terms of action. War cannot be resolved out of existence; it must be forced out. Similarly with racial prejudice, economic injustice and every other wrong. To put an end to war we must do more than outlaw it by solemn resolutions. We must suggest and practice an adequate substitute. We must, by drastic, revolutionary action, get at the roots of war and eliminate them. We must practice love and good will, forgiveness and unselfishness. We must carry the gospel of the great Peacemaker, Jesus Christ, to all men and nations, and we must labor and sacrifice to make that gospel effective in terms of life.

Now this is no new thought. Pastors have been preaching for many years that Christian missions

and world peace go hand in hand; that a world divided against itself (with those who give their allegiance to Christ unconcerned over those who give their allegiance to some Antichrist) cannot but fall into tragedy. But has the Christian church as a whole listened and believed? Look not at professions, but at the record. Ye shall know men—and churches—by their fruits. If the church, instead of passing resolutions as to the inspiration of Holy Scripture, had acted upon the clear teachings of Holy Scripture, belief in and support of missionary work would long since have been universal and wholehearted instead of limited and meager. We vote for the equality of all races and classes, but has the church been consistent in its practice of race and class equality? The workingman doesn't think so, when he sees the church so often siding with the vested interests of wealth and power. The Negro doesn't think so, when he sees himself frowned upon and frozen out of the white man's church. The woman caught in adultery doesn't think so, when she hears church members condemning and ostracizing her instead of forgiving her and helping her in her problem of rehabilitation. The church as the Body of Christ, and individual Christians as members of that Body, must pass beyond the resolutions stage if the gospel of Christ is ever to become effective in the life of the world. Resolutions must give way to acts. Whatsoever our Lord says unto us, we must learn not only to hear and admire it, but also to *do* it.

Nor should we forget the significance of that all-inclusive word "whatsoever." Very often what he tells us to do doesn't make easy hearing, or much sense from the human point of view. "Forgive your enemies"—that is hard. "Turn the other cheek; do unto others as you would have them do unto you"—that doesn't make much sense. But then neither did Christ's command to the servants at the marriage feast: "Fill the waterpots with water." What sense did that make? They were expected to bring *wine* to the governor of the feast. To bring in *water* might cost them a beating, if not worse. But, the record tells us, "they filled them up to the brim." They must have had some kind of faith, for they did what he told them to do. And the result—faith, obedient action, unforeseen and unbelievable results.

And what Christ did that day at Cana he continues to do today. It is in his power, and certainly it is his will, to turn the thin, tasteless water of our lives into rich and potent wine, if we will hold up our end by doing whatsoever he says unto us without hesitation or qualification. When he says "Forgive," we are to forgive—promptly, willingly, completely. When he says "Preach my gospel to every creature," we are to do it—earnestly, sacrificially, universally. When he says "Follow me," we are to follow him—through the valley of self-sacrifice and up the mount to a cross, if need be, regardless of the pleas of friends, the jeers of enemies or the rebelling of our own flesh.

But such a course of life will not be followed by the man who is content with passing resolutions. Before he can walk this way, a revolution must take place within his own soul. In his talk to Nicodemus, Jesus expressed it thus: "You must be born again." Man of himself can pass resolutions, but he cannot experience such an inner revolution apart from God.

Christ is seeking and knocking. The choice is ours. We can insist upon going along our own way, passing resolutions but bearing no fruit, only pleasant-to-see blossoms. Or we can surrender ourselves to God, allow him to revolutionize our hearts and lives, and become fruit-bearers, capable of satisfying the hunger, both physical and spiritual, of men and the world.

Which shall we be—resolutionists or revolutionists, blossom-bearers or fruit-bearers, hearers of the Word only or doers of it as well? Our answer to this question will hasten or retard the coming of our Savior's Kingdom.

Titles and Texts

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

William I. Newman, Bethany Congregational, Los Angeles, Calif. "It Takes All Kinds of People to Make a Church." Matt. 11:19—*Wisdom is justified of her children.*

C. Sumpter Logan, First Presbyterian, Lawrenceville, Ill. "God's Magnificent Show in Summer." Ps. 104:24—*O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: The earth is full of thy riches.*

Graham R. Hodges, First Congregational, Ticonderoga, N. Y. "Common Sense versus Jesus Christ." I Cor. 1:25—*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men.*

S. M. Penn, Headland, Ala. "Ask Yourself This Question." Mark 14:19—*They began to be sorrowful, and say to him one after another, Is it I?*

Austin E. Armstrong, First Methodist, Dingman's Ferry, Pa. "God-Fearing Able Men Our Country's Imperative Need." Exod. 18:21—*Provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain, and place such to be rulers.*

Richard L. James, Riverside Avenue Christian, Jacksonville, Fla. "Things Jesus Began." Acts 1:1—*In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach.*

By William S. Hill

When Life's Foundations Are Shaken

Isaiah 54:2.

EVERY human life is punctuated by minor disappointments and various trials and tribulations. But occasionally a human life is confronted by a major catastrophe—the death of a loved one, the breakup of a marriage, the failure of a business, the onset of a fatal disease—and the average person finds it far from easy to adjust himself to what has happened.

We can think of this situation in terms of a houseowner. All the time he has to be doing things to keep his house in repair. First something goes wrong with the plumbing, then with the electricity; there comes the day when the building needs a new roof or a new furnace; and at intervals it needs painting and wall-papering. There's always something needing attention. This corresponds to the minor vexations and problems of ordinary living. But occasionally a house catches fire or is smashed in a windstorm or damaged by an explosion; and then the owner has the job, not of simple repair, but of rebuilding. And this corresponds to a major catastrophe in human life.

What does our religion say about meeting major catastrophe? It says: When your foundations are shaken, that is your opportunity to push them out, to make them stronger, and to build a bigger house. Speaking to people who lived not in wooden houses but in tents, Isaiah said this after a national calamity:

> Widen the place for your tent,
> Spare not your canvas, stretch it out;
> Lengthen your ropes,
> Drive in your tent-pegs.

The message of the prophet here is that catastrophe presents the opportunity for new growth. A tent that has blown down gives you the chance to put up a bigger tent—one with longer ropes and deeper stakes; a major tragedy that leaves you deeply unsettled carries with it possibilities for new life.

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Now I realize it's very easy to say that when life's foundations are shaken we are given a chance to build better and stronger than ever. And I realize that while it's easy to say, it's not easy to do. But let us think of a major catastrophe and consider the ways open to us of facing it.

One reaction is to become so completely demoralized that one throws discretion to the winds and goes on and destroys the whole house. You recall the movie "Rebecca," in which the housekeeper, furious because she had been thwarted, set fire to the house in which she had lived for years and burned it to the ground. This is fiction, but it has numerous counterparts in life. A man is unhappy in his work and becomes a drunkard; a woman has a terrible disappointment and commits suicide by taking an overdose of sleeping pills; a high school girl has an argument with her family and to spite them she elopes with a boy she doesn't even respect. We have to sympathize with people whose distress makes them do such things; nevertheless the fact is that they are reacting to sorrow in an inadequate and disastrous way.

Facing Life's Major Catastrophes

Another way we can try to handle catastrophe is to adopt the illusion that nothing has happened. We can deceive ourselves into pretending that it is only a nightmare and that the horror of it all will disappear when we wake up. In other words, we can live in a house of dreams. This was the course adopted by one of the most unforgettable of Dickens' characters, Miss Havisham, in *Great Expectations*. Miss Havisham, you will remember, was deserted by her fiancé on the day of her wedding. The wedding cake was already in the reception room, the guests were assembled, and Miss Havisham herself was dressed for the marriage ceremony, when word came that the groom had slipped away. And throughout the rest of her long life, Miss Havisham permitted nothing to be touched, let alone changed, in her house. To her dying day the wedding cake remained in its place on the table, where it gathered dust and harbored cobwebs in its decorations. Miss Havisham never wore anything other than her wedding dress; in time it became frayed and frowzy, looking more like a beggar's rags than a bride's apparel. Though years came and went, Miss Havisham permitted no outward change to shatter the illusion that it

was still her wedding day and that the groom might arrive to claim her at any moment.

This case drawn from fiction has many counterparts of life. A little boy is killed by an automobile, and for years his mother keeps his room just as it was when he was alive—his toys on the shelf, his clothes hanging in the closet, even a pair of clean pajamas under his pillow. Or again, a man of wealth loses all his money and has to earn his living doing menial work. Even in his humble job he continually puts on airs, tries to lord it over his fellow workers, and on every occasion seeks to make people feel he is a man of distinction. Of course we can sympathize with people whose tragedies make them resort to such illusions. Nevertheless their resistance to change, their meeting of catastrophe by letting themselves believe it never happened, is to lose touch with reality. It is to live in a dream house. And what a tragedy it is when they finally wake up! They discover they've only been deceiving themselves, and their last state is worse than their first.

Dream Houses

A more common reaction than living in a dream house is to take up living in a smaller house—to pull in the foundations, to erect a more constricted dwelling. It is to withdraw from life. The reaction is expressed by the words: "Life hurt me once. I won't let it hurt me again." I remember a story—though I don't recall the author—of a wealthy family living in the large house of an English country estate. For some reason or other the husband and wife had a quarrel, and the husband moved out of the house and took up residence in the gardener's cottage. He seldom stirred from there; he gave up his interest not only in his children but in his horses, his dogs, his garden, his whole estate. For fear of being hurt again, he exchanged a vulnerable life in a mansion for a sheltered life in a gardener's cottage.

Here again is a case drawn from fiction which has its counterparts in life. A man's wife dies, and he deliberately goes out to constrict and impoverish his own life. He gives up going to social meetings, he spends more and more time by himself, and he scrupulously avoids any place associated with his wife. He doesn't go to church any more because it reminds him of her; he avoids restaurants where they ate together; he gives up the hobbies in which they both were interested. In a word, he lets his soul live in a house that gets smaller and smaller. Once more, we can sympathize with a person whose sorrows make him fear being hurt again. Nevertheless it is emotionally unhealthy to let your interests dwindle and shrink and finally atrophy. It is disastrous to let your soul occupy a smaller dwelling.

So these are all ways of meeting catastrophe. When life's foundations are shaken, we can in a fit of fury go on and completely wreck the house; or we can lose touch with reality and live in a dream house; or we can withdraw from life, frightened and hurt, and live in a tiny cottage.

But our religion offers us another possibility. When catastrophe strikes and life's foundations are shaken, our religion says to us, paraphrasing the words of Isaiah: Don't wreck what's left of the house, don't live in a dream house, don't withdraw into a tiny cottage; but push out the foundations, make them stronger, *and on them erect for yourself a larger house.* Granted, it isn't easy, but look at the alternatives! To build a larger house is the only way to grow; it is the only way to avoid an increasing bitterness and despair and sense of futility.

Build a Larger House

Now I would like to take you in imagination, not to a book, but to an actual house in New England. In that house lives a friend of mine whose wife died very suddenly last April. It was, of course, a terrible blow; but after the initial shock, he realized he was going to have to try twice as hard to make an adequate home for their seventeen-year-old daughter. The first thing he did was to make the attic into a comfortable apartment for a housekeeper who came to live with them. Then he fixed up the basement into an attractive recreation room so his daughter would have a place to entertain her friends. And last he added a bay window to the living room and in it he installed a television set. He literally enlarged his house, you see. But he not only enlarged his house; he broadened his horizons as well. For his daughter's sake he tried to spend more time at home than he had done formerly, and in those periods at home he developed an interest in literature and in painting. He fulfilled the command of Isaiah; he stretched out his tent, he lengthened his cords, he drove in his stakes.

Our Destiny

But this can only be done with faith. If we are to grow better, rather than bitter, when calamity overtakes us, we have to believe that God intends great things for us. We have to be certain that God has a high destiny for us, and that he wishes us to grow toward its fulfillment.

The saintly John Olier expressed this idea in a quaint but interesting way. He used to say that God wished to establish a cathedral in every human heart and that he wanted this cathedral to be large and spacious, a building worthy of the divine majesty. But, Olier maintained, that cathedral is built mostly by the way a person handles his suffering. If he has a glimpse of the person God wants him to be, then he uses every pain and every sorrow as a means of enlarging that inner house of God. The more his suffering deepens his compassion, broadens his understanding and heightens his devotion, the greater and the more worthy of God that interior shrine becomes. Therefore, said Olier, look upon every calamity that shakes your life to its foundations as an opportunity to make a finer temple, a nobler sanctuary in your heart.

Oliver Wendell Holmes put the same thought in different language:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave they low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
[Reach up toward] heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

New Life in Christ

But now let us go from poetry to a very human incident. A little girl, beloved of her father, was desperately sick. No one knows how many doctors he went to, how many remedies he tried—for he was wealthy enough to afford anything; but to no avail. Finally, hearing that Jesus was in town, he went to ask him for help. Before Jesus himself could get to the man's house, a servant arrived saying the little girl was dead. But when Jesus heard it he said to the father, "Fear not, only believe." And he went to that man's home and restored his little girl.

Exactly what happened I don't know, but I am confident of this: in one way or another Jesus brought new life into that house. And from that day to this the same miracle has been repeated thousands of times over. People have been broken by tragedy, they have been crushed by catastrophe; but as they have discovered the power that is in Christ, a new life has come into their house.

There are moments when life's foundations are shaken. It is then we need to hear the voice of Isaiah telling us to stretch out our canvas, to lengthen our ropes and strengthen our stakes. It is then we need to hear the voice of Holmes, saying, "Build thou more stately mansions, O my soul." But most of all we need to hear a calmer, gentler voice—the voice of Jesus, saying, "Fear not, only believe." For that is the voice that brings a new strength to our foundations, a new life to our house.

WHAT DID YOU GET *FROM* CHRISTMAS?

A Children's Sermon by Ralph Conover Lankler

IT is quite natural to have our friends ask us on the day after Christmas, "What did you get for Christmas?" Boys and girls are usually anxious to know what their friends received for Christmas because they are eager to tell about the presents given to them.

Giving and receiving at Christmas is in keeping with the spirit of the day. It is a time when we recognize God's greatest gift to the world in the person of his Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Matthew tells us that the Wise Men journeyed from the East bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. We are grateful to God for his gift to us at Christmas and we show our love to one another by giving presents. Like the Wise Men of old, we should find ways of giving to Jesus either through the church or by helping someone who is in need.

When you were asked, "What did you get for Christmas?" you undoubtedly mentioned the books, clothes, candy, toys and many other nice gifts that you received—things to eat, to wear, to play with. The question that I would like to ask you is not "What did you get *for* Christmas?" but "What did get *from* Christmas?"

During the Christmas season we hear about the birth of Jesus in word and music and we see it enacted in pageantry. Our Sunday school and church services with their special lessons, programs, decorations and music have given us a picture and told us the story of how Jesus came into this world. We have received a better understanding of the birth of Jesus and all that he has meant to our world.

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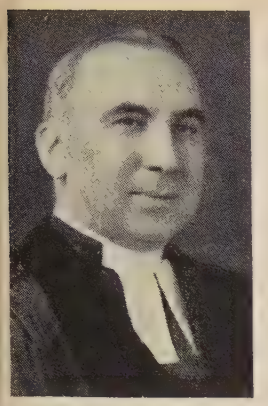
At Christmas we feel closer to our loved ones and friends than at any other time in the year. Families are brought together, and we exchange greetings with those whom we have not seen for a long time. We receive a new realization of the meaning of the love of God for us and the love that we have for each other.

A third thing that we receive from Christmas is a feeling of good will and generosity. It is a time when people are more generous than at any other time in the year, when they feel more kindly toward one another, when they have more peace and joy in their hearts.

A Christmas present received by one boy was a transformer. As we know, a transformer is used on electric trains to make it possible for them to run and go places. A transformer takes the power of the electric wire that comes into our homes and reduces it so that it may be used on toys such as electric trains without injuring or hurting us. Christmas should be a transforming experience for us. It should be a means whereby the power of God comes into our lives and enables us to grow spiritually.

The good things to eat, to play with, to wear, that we get *for* Christmas will not last as long as the good things that we get *from* Christmas. The things that we get *for* Christmas wear out or we will outgrow them; but the things that we get *from* Christmas, such as the knowledge of Jesus and what he has meant to the world, the feeling of love that God has for us and we have for one another, the good will and peace that we feel toward other people and our desire to help them—these will never wear out but go with us all our lives.



By Herbert Booth Smith

The Tragedy of Indifference

Though they keep up a form of religion, they will have nothing to do with it as a force. II Timothy 3:5.

WHAT an apt description this is of the difference between a static and a dynamic church: form versus force! As the King James Version puts it, some folk have a "form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." To one who surveys the position of the Christian church in the world today, and observes its apparent impotence to affect or improve the world situation—especially if he believes that divine resources are at its disposal—the words of this Scripture have wonderful meaning. Either there is no power available, or else it is not drawn upon. Why should millions of Christians go through the ritual of worship week by week, and yet just barely hold their own as a force in modern civilization?

A very incisive remark was made years ago by Dr. Hutchison Cockburn, ex-moderator of the Church of Scotland. He said: "Hitler himself would have had no objection to a church which dealt solely with the next world, and left this one severely alone." One of the main reasons why Martin Niemoller spent eight years in a concentration camp was that he was one of the few German leaders with sufficient vision to see what was happening. He could not sit down and acquiesce in a regime which tore up the Ten Commandments and laughed in the face of God. Perhaps some of us may have to seal our testimony with our blood before the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ. Someone has defined indifference to moral issues as "the painlessness of the wound which has begun to mortify."

What are some of the areas of tragic indifference today?

First, there is the increasing secularism of modern civilization. J. G. Holyoake is said to have been the first to use the word "secularism" (in 1845) to describe a certain philosophy of life. It was defined as "the doctrine that morality should be based only in regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future life." This amounts to practical atheism: the living of one's life utterly without regard to a Higher Power. It has been suggested that our Christian attitude to God and our neighbor might be symbolized by a triangle, in which the height of the figure represents our relation to God and the base of our attitude to our fellow man. Secularism erases the altitude and leaves us only with the base—and it is *base* indeed. It deals with the here and now, but has nothing to do with Overthere. Arnold Toynbee, Elton Trueblood, Henry Knox Sherrill, and many other Christian leaders diagnose the dilemma of modern man as a spiritual anemia. They admit a wholesale drift from organized religion, resulting in a deficiency of moral dynamic. Dr. Sherrill, in his recent book *The Church's Ministry in Our Time,* goes back to the days of the Roman empire and finds the supreme cause of its downfall in the failure of its culture to meet the spiritual and intellectual needs of men.

Areas of Indifference

Perhaps the limit of secularism will be reached when persons are outmoded and robots take their place; for robots have no soul to save and no code of ethics to follow. We laugh at the suggestion of the robot, but it is no laughing matter. Mankind is apparently heading toward a push-button age in which automatons will perform a thousand tasks formerly done by man himself. The result will be a social revolution beyond our conceiving. Lewis Mumford says it will put man back once more in an Edenlike state. But one suspects it will be more like Paradise Lost than Paradise Regained. When a Newfoundland engineer can push a button which launches an airplane, and by radio-control heads it out over the Atlantic; and when, twelve hours later, it makes a perfect landing in England, with its controls untouched by human hands—that gives us pause. The gray matter of the brain is being replaced in the robot by aluminum foil that stores away electrical images for future use. Amazing mechanisms are being perfected for typing letters, husking nuts, serving restaurant meals, and measuring a customer for a new suit of clothes. Whole factories are to be operated by robot control. One wonders where this will lead. Will robots perform weddings and baptisms and officiate in the sacred offices of the

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dead? God save us from such a civilization!

Second, there is an increasing indifference to the responsibilities of church membership. How many church members do you and I know who are in dead earnest? Too many of them are dead, in earnest. One recalls Kipling's phrase, "willful missing," which referred not to Christian soldiers but to secular ones. To the dead, wounded and missing he adds a fourth category, which includes cowards and deserters. These are his lines:

> There is a world outside the one you know,
> To which for curiousness 'ell can't compare.
> It is the place where "willful missing" go,
> As we can testify, for we are there.

Some years ago a church census of Chicago was taken. Great surprise was created by the discovery of the fact that nearly half a million persons had letters of membersip in distant churches, which they never had presented to any local organization. All our cities are full of such absentee members. At the time of the Chicago census it was also announced that there were 25,000 "lost" Presbyterians in New York city, and in Detroit there were more members outside all the churches than inside. In my own parish I have discovered professing Christians who have lived here from five to forty years with lapsed memberships that had never been revived. Upon making a study of our denominational annual reports for a given five-year period, I found that we lost by suspension (or lapsed membership) three-fourths as many as we received by confession of faith .While new members enter the front door, dead ones pass out the back way.

Social Action

Frederick K. Stamm, well known radio minister, undertook to find out from a quarter of a million listeners over a ten-year period the reasons for failure to attend divine worship. He reported that the replies could be summarized under five general headings: first, poor preaching; second, excessive denominationalism, resulting in overchurching of small communities; third, ugly and gloomy church buildings, with little to create the atmosphere of worship; fourth, little real preaching for a verdict; and finally, the denomination of churches by the old and bigoted, with too little attention to a worthwhile program for youth. A recent issue of the *Christian Century* carried these headlines: "British Church Rolls Shrinking—New Statistics Show Decline Since 1940 for All Groups. Royal Commission Investigates Gambling." There is more connection between the two matters than might appear on the surface.

A third area of indifference is that of social education and action. It is interesting to observe that the one man whom our Lord pictures as being in the torments of hell is the rich man in the narrative of Dives and Lazarus. We are not told that the capitalist got his wealth dishonestly or that he had robbed the beggar at his gate. He is consigned to punishment because he fares sumptuously every day in the presence of human poverty and wretchedness. He was breaking the law of community and the law of love.

There are many who decry the "social gospel" as though it were at variance with the personal gospel. They say that economic conditions and political pronouncements are none of the church's business. That was the doctrine of laissez faire which brought on the French Revolution. One recalls also the industrial revolution of the days of Adam Smith of England, in which government held aloof from contracts between employers and employees. But the "let alone" policy so speedily resulted in widespread exploitation of wage-earners that there was a swing of the pendulum in the opposite direction. Labor has had to win its rights by force.

Militarization of Life

Albion Fellows Bacon in the *Survey* told of a wealthy woman who sat next to him at an elegant luncheon and divided her time between inquiries about his work and disdainful remarks about the poor. Upon discovering what the proposed new tenement law would give to the needy in the way of running water and proper plumbing, she expressed herself as to the waste of money in giving such things to people "who put coal and vegetables into the bathtub" and "didn't appreciate anything done for them." When her tirade abated, Bacon ventured a question: "May I ask whether you have worked much among the poor?" She answered in a tone of horror and disgust: "O mercy, no. I couldn't bear to mix with these creatures." His reply was: "I judge so; for I never heard anyone speak of them that way who really knew them."

In *The Unrecognized Christ* John Gardiner tells of a friend who went as a missionary to the Fly river region of New Guinea, to take the place of the murdered Chalmers. On a furlough he told Gardiner of the type of people he found there. They seemed utterly devoid of a moral sense. If a baby began to cry the mother would throw it into a ditch and let it die. If a man broke his leg, he too would be left on the roadside to fend for himself. Could one preach to people like that? Gardiner asked. "No, I didn't preach," the missionary answered. "I lived. When I saw a forsaken baby crying I comforted it. When I saw a man with a broken leg I mended it. Gradually those people began to come to me and say, 'What does this mean?' That gave me my chance, and I preached the gospel." "Did you succeed?" "When I came away, I left a church."

Still another area which needs the attention of Christian people is the increasing militarization of American life. How many of us are aware that our country is becoming more and more military-minded? A recent writer insists that we are unconsciously slipping away from the customary American way of life into one more characteristic of other nations. He refers to the *Basic History of the United States,* by Charles and Mary Beard, to prove that one of the chief motives

which drove the earliest immigrants from their homes in Europe was the desire to get away from the devastations of the endless wars and conflicts there. They abhorred the snatching and selling of men for service in the armies of petty kings, who made life a terror for thousands of men of military age. What a travesty it would be for our country to imitate the outworn methods of other nations across the sea!

In an 1880 issue of *Puck* there was a cartoon which showed Uncle Sam as a modern Noah welcoming into the "U.S. Ark of Refuge" a stream of pilgrims, fleeing from the impending evils of their own countries and lured on by the benefits of the new land beyond. The cartoon was headed: "No Compulsory Military Service." We recall that some years ago Lieutenant Colonel Roscoe Conkling, formerly on the staff of the Selective Service Administration, resigned his position because he was forbidden to speak against peacetime conscription. In a pamphlet published by the Post-War World Council he charged that the pressure for permanent conscription and other features of a huge military establishment came largely from Washington, where many army officers would be laid off or receive cuts in pay and rank unless a vast army was retained.

We need to hold to the viewpoint of one of the great Protestant churches whose constitution states that "God alone is Lord of the conscience." Surely in a land which has been declared by the Supreme Court to be a Christian nation, there ought to be recognition of the right of men to differ as to the conflicting claims of Christ and country. One might mention the case of a Mennonite, Austin Regier. Some time ago a federal judge in Minneapolis sentenced him to a year and a day in a federal penitentiary for refusing to register for the draft. By this conviction he becomes in a sense branded for life. As a federal convict he loses his rights of citizenship, including that of suffrage. Other young men are being dealt with in a similar manner week after week, and many of them are receiving much longer sentences. As one reads the text of the statement presented by Mr. Regier, indicating his affiliation with a denomination which for some four hundred years has been known for its opposition to war, one begins to wonder whether we are living in Russia or in America. It would seem that genuine conscientous objectors on religious grounds ought to be dealt with in a different way from those who refuse to serve their country just to save their skin. There is all the difference between saving one's soul and saving one's skin. When the watchman on the walls cries out about the approach of the enemy, it is up to all to protect themselves as they deem best. Let us be among the watchmen!

Who are the best contemporary preachers? Make your nominations on the form which appears on page 21.—*The Editors.*

A Pastoral Prayer

By William Carman Trembath

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Teaneck, New Jersey

O THOU eternal God, father of love and mercy, in thy hands are the destinies of men and of nations. We pray that we may be blessed with a vital sense of thy sovereignty.

Show us anew that in our obedience of thy laws and in our living within thy will we are fulfilling the highest purposes for our lives. In these tragic times may we stand fast in the faith wherein thou hast made us free. Let the living of our days give testimony to the belief that thou art our refuge and strength, an ever present help in time of trouble.

Amid a world of unrest and destruction we acknowledge our sin and bow before thee in humility. We have been a disappointment to thee for we have failed thee again and again. We confess our selfish aims, our pride, our self-dependence. We have been shown those whom the injustices of the world have bruised and beaten, and we have passed by on the other side. We have refused to heed the cries of our brothers who need thy love through us.

To thee alone do we look for direction when confusion encompasses us, for light when the way is dark. Interpret to us the mind of Christ, and grant us thy help in the task of applying his spirit in the world.

Save our nation, O God, from foes within as well as without. Save us from the prejudices of race and class which divide thy children and deny our human brotherhood. Save us from the crime, the immorality and the corruption which have been a blight upon our land. May our citizenry be strong and courageous.

We join our prayers today with those of thy church throughout the world who pray for the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Give unto thy church its ancient power that it may be a healing power for the nations.

Grant unto us the love that we should have for one another. Teach us how to bear one another's burdens. May this house of prayer be a place where the lonely find companionship, the heavy-laden find rest for their souls, and those who sorrow are strengthened and upheld by the everlasting arms. In the name and for the sake of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Haunted Man

By Thomas Franklyn Hudson

Psalm 51

DURING the Christmas season many of us have heard or seen Charles Dickens' famous "Christmas Carol." In the English-speaking world it has become almost as integral a part of the celebration of the season as Christmas trees and plum pudding. But I wonder how many of you know another of Dickens' Christmas tales, "The Haunted Man."

It is the story of a famous lecturer in chemistry by the name of Redlaw, widely known for his brilliant knowledge. To the outward observer, Redlaw was a huge success in his chosen field. Students came to him from far and near. However, in his inward life, Redlaw was a haunted man. Because of some early experiences of heartbreak and grief, he was tortured by their memories.

During a reverie, the specter of his tortured self appears before him and offers to give him the power to banish these haunting memories from his mind forever. "Go!" cries the specter. "Your wisdom has discovered that the memory of sorrow, wrong and trouble is the lot of all mankind, and that mankind would be happier in its other memories without it. Go! Be its benefactor! Freed from these remembrances, carry involuntarily the blessings of such freedom with you. Go! Be happy in the good you have won, and the good you do!"

This, I am sure, is a common experience. Who among us does not hold in his mind memories that he would give anything in the world to forget? And yet, as Dickens shows in this story, these memories not only have the power to make us bitter and unhappy; they also have the power to make us a blessing to our fellow men. How can we enter into the life of another person in his time of need if we have not had felt similar need ourselves? We do not always have the power to erase from our minds the memories that haunt us, but we do have the power to use those memories for constructive purposes.

Consider, in the first place, that the agony of remorse is God's means of saving our souls. One of the most poignant examples of this is found in the 51st Psalm. No passage of Scripture touches our hearts more deeply than this psalm. What were its antecedents? It was written by David, who was one of the saints of the Old Testament. But like so many of us, David had forgotten God in his prosperity. Things were going well with him, and his thoughts of God shifted from the center to the periphery of his mind.

The Value of Remorse

When God leaves the center of our thoughts, we do not have the power to overcome the temptations that beset us. Temptations are the common lot of us all. They come to God's people as well as to the pagans and the indifferent. Our Lord himself was tempted—the Bible says he was tempted "in every respect . . . as we are." But when God is in the center of our thoughts, he gives us the power to resist temptation.

But God was pushed out of the center of David's thoughts. His mind was becoming more and more absorbed in temporal things. A particular temptation which came to him at this time happened to a be a sexual one. The special object of his attention was a woman of great beauty and energy by the name of Bathsheba. To make matters even worse, she was married, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. His passion was overwhelming to David, and he and Bathsheba committed adultery. Then followed the agony of remorse, and David cried out in the words of our psalm.

The memory of his wrongdoing was not blotted from David's memory. Doubtless he strove with all his might to forget it. It caused him pain and anguish and sleepless nights. But it was also an ever present reminder to him that his own will power was not enough to enable him to resist temptation. David was well on his way to being a lost soul. But through his remorse and agony, he was thrown back to the only place of refuge that was left—God.

My friend, if you are suffering remorse this morning for something you have done, thank God for it! If God has laid his stroke upon you and

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THOMAS FRANKLYN HUDSON is minister of First Presbyterian Church, Oakland, Calif., which is about to celebrate its 100th anniversary. A graduate of McCormick Theological Seminary, he held previous pastorates in San Diego, Calif., and Portland, Ore., and was associate executive secretary of the presbytery of Los Angeles while serving as a lecturer in the department of religion at Occidental College. A member of his denomination's council on theological education, he is also chairman of the committee on ministerial relations of the presbytery of San Francisco.

troubled your conscience, if he has given you sleepless nights of bitter anguish, then thank him for it, for it is his means of saving your soul. But don't stop there! If you do, you have only wasted the entire experience and you will have to go through it all over again. As the great Chinese philosopher Lao-tse said, "Failure is the foundation of success and the means by which it is achieved."

Consider, in the second place, that without remorse there can be no salvation. If David had not felt the pangs of anguish for his sin he would never have been driven back to God. Temptation and our acquiescence in it often hardens as well as breaks an individual. We become immune to the feelings of other people and persist in gratifying our desires regardless of the effect upon others. This applies, of course, not only to sexual temptation. It is also patently evident in the lust for power, for wealth, for the amassing of material things, for the inflation of the ego.

This is what Jesus meant when he spoke of the unpardonable sin. You will recall that in one of his conversations with his contemporaries he said that all sins would be forgiven except one—namely, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This statement has been a source of trouble to many devout Christian people. Like many ministers, I have had worried people come to me declaring in tears that they were convinced that they had committed the unpardonable sin.

The Unpardonable Sin

But such people are never guilty of the unpardonable sin, for the unpardonable sin is just this thing that I have been talking about. It is that callousness which makes people obtuse to the gravity of their sins. It is that hardening of the arteries of the conscience which makes them impervious to any feeling of remorse. It is that barrier which prevents the cleansing hyssop of God's grace from purging their souls of their sin. How can God forgive sins when the individual will not acknowledge the existence of those sins? That is what is meant by the unpardonable sin. But it is not God who refuses to pardon it; it is those who will not allow him to do so.

This is a principle which I have seen illustrated so clearly by my friends in Alcoholics Anonymous. When I first began to work with these men and women I thought some of theme were rather hard-hearted and hard-boiled. I know of cases where the wife or mother or husband of an alcoholic would call them up and say, "Please come and help the one I love. He is drunk. He needs help. There is no one to whom I can turn." And the member of Alcoholics Anonymous would say, "Does *he* want to be helped? Is *he* really asking for help?" The reply would come back, "No, but you must come and persuade him that he needs to be helped." But the Alcoholics Anonymous member would answer, "We can't help him until he really wants help. If he does not want help now, we will just have to stand patiently by and wait until he hits bottom. Then, when *he* calls for us, we will come."

So it is with Christ. He stands waiting, anxious, desirous of helping us. But he will not intrude. He will not break into our personalities by violence. We must invite him in. And the place to start is with a genuine remorse for the evil we have done.

So thank God for the memories that haunt you. Without them there can be no salvation. They are the means whereby you have access to peace of conscience and ultimate victory. If you do not use them for your salvation, the result will be frustration, nervous tension and even worse. If you do use them as a means—even a painful means—of letting God take control of your life, then you have saved your soul, not only for some far-distant eternity, but here and now.

Transformed Sinners

Finally, have you ever noticed the fact that God does his best work through transformed sinners? History is full of examples of this truth. Do you remember Augustine, one of the most influential men who ever lived so far as the history of the Christian church is concerned? An outstanding theologian, a bishop of the church, an evangelist who preached, taught and wrote, winning men and women to Christ, giving leadership to the Christian cause in one of its most critical periods. But read his *Confessions,* one of the most revealing and intimate books ever written. Read in that great book his recital of his personal sins. Read how his conscience began to trouble him and how he tried to salve his conscience by praying, "O Lord, make me good, but not just yet!" And then read how finally he wrote, after reading Romans 13:13: "I had no wish to read further, and no need. For in that instant, with the very ending of the sentence, it was as though a light of utter confidence shone in all my heart, and all the darkness of uncertainty vanished away."*

Did that mean that Augustine remembered his sins no more? Of course not! There was deep remorse for his wasted years. But he used that remorse for his salvation and the salvation of others. Because he himself had been tempted and had given in to his temptation, he understood how others could do the same thing. Because he had suffered remorse, he understood how others would also suffer remorse. But because he had used that remorse as a means of allowing God to take control of his life, he could guide others to find the same salvation.

Here again we see the value of the technique of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have had many a person come to me in deep mental anguish, wishing to be freed from the power of alcohol. What do I know about what they have been through? How can I grasp the reality of that awful thirst which

*From *The Confessions of St. Augustine* in the translation by F. J. Sheed. Copyright 1943. Sheed & Ward, Inc., New York. Pp. 178-79.

has become a part of their lives? I can't. I have not been through the fire. But I can call one of my friends who is a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, a man who has gone through the same experience, but a man who has come through victoriously. And that man, having gone through the agony himself and having become a conqueror, can do more for the other in one hour than I could in a year. Yes, God does his best work through transformed sinners, men and women who have reached the depths of depression but who have used the experience to lay hold upon the power of God and allow that power to save them and, through them, to save others.

My friend, what about you? Before we enter this new year, will you not let God take control of your life and transform it into something that will be a blessing to you instead of a burden, a joy instead of a frustration, a power for good in the world instead of a drag on others? As the old year fades out, it is time for reminiscing. And since we are human beings we shall say to ourselves, "If only I could blot this or that experience out of my mind and remember it no more!" You can't do it, my friend. It is written there in indelible ink. Every experience that comes to us becomes a part of us forever. But you can use it positively and with the help of God transform it into a lasting blessing to yourself and others. Will you do it? May God help you to say Yes!

Pulpit Post

More on American Preaching

SIR: For some time I have been trying to evaluate the cross-section of American preaching appearing in the *Pulpit* by scanning the sermons to see how frequently Christ is mentioned. Try it and see how revealing your search will prove to be. In a recent issue I discovered the following. In an article on preaching, 'Christ' is not mentioned at all. In seven sermons Christ is mentioned 16 times, usually in a phrase such as 'body of Christ,' 'Church of Christ,' 'spirit of Christ,' or presenting Christ as a teacher, or encouraging one to follow Christ. In this particular issue there is not a single reference to Christ crucified, to faith in Christ, to Christ in the real meaning of the word, the Messiah. Not once is repentance and remission of sins preached in his name.

If this is a cross-section of contemporary American preaching, is the Church in America being built upon the foundation of the apstles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Cornerstone?

Not Christ, the perfect man, the splendid example, the profound teacher, the noble inspiration, but Christ, the Son of God, the Reconciler of man unto God, must be the glad note of our preaching today, as in every age. Is not this the missing note in contemporary preaching?

Mt. Olive Lutheran, BERNARD H. HEMMETER.
Chicago, Ill.

The Best

SIR: Continue the good work of bringing to us the best from the pulpits of America. THOMAS B. MUSSER.
St. Paul's Evangelical & Reformed,
West Milton, Pa.

The Editors Are Rescued!

SIR: In the September issue of The Pulpit, Cyrus M. Wallick expresses the opinion that most of the sermons which you publish are scarcely worth the trouble of reading. It is hard to see how such a sweeping and extreme statement can be justified. The sermons in The Pulpit represent many types of preaching. They cover a wide range both in content and homiletical approach. Moreover, those which are printed are selected from thousands of other sermons which have been submitted. If most of these are essentially worthless, the editors must have a positive genius for editorial ineptitude. Personally I do not believe that they possess such an abyssmal degree of incompetency.

I regard The Pulpit as one of the most stimulating publications which come to my study. I have been a subscriber to it ever since the first number. In my opinion it was never better than it is today. I shall forego the desire to mention some of the fine examples of homiletic art which have appeared in recent numbers. If I found nothing of value in them, I should be sorry for myself.

Department of English, LEWIS H. CHRISMAN.
West Virginia Wesleyan College,
Buckhannon, W. Va.

The Kraft System

SIR: I have read through the article (Oct.) by Virgil A. Kraft. Frankly, I do not think the system practical, at least for me. In my judgment, it is too complicated for most of us and it is impossible to classify materials so finely as this plan proposes.

Personally, I use a somewhat similar method of accumulating material but if I were to classify material so closely, there would be little opportunity for fresh inspiration and fresh insight into my material when unexpected opportunities for its use present themselves. I remember Halford Luccock's rcommendation at Yale and have followed it pretty much myself, namely, to keep the material in unclassified form and keep going over it from time to time. This permits fresh inspiration and insights to come as you go over it with different ideas and points of view in mind. Frequently material becomes useable in a context that you would never have dreamed in the process of classifying and filing.

I use this method, working over the fresher materials more frequently but on occasion dipping back into materials accumulated perhaps a year or more before.

I also like to have my sermon subjects chosen six months to a year in advance with a manila folder for each topic. Then as I run across something that may fit into one of these sermons in process, I slip the material into the proper file.

I am not sure that this is an adequate method but it works for me and I am sure that the Kraft system would not work for me. There may be some, however, to whom Mr. Kraft's method would appeal.

First Christian, HAROLD L. LUNGER.
Tucson, Ariz.

Evangelistic Sermons

SIR: You are to be congratulated upon giving us a most excellent journal. Since you give us samples of the *best* sermons, why not give us some articles from some of the outstanding professors of preaching on how to *prepare* the best sermons? I also suggest an occasional evangelistic sermon by one of our modern evangelists.

Winter Garden, Fla. CLARENCE PERRY.

[We are now planning a Lenten issue which will contain sermons by the outstanding evangelists of our day.—THE EDITORS.]

Sermon Summaries

A Faith for These Times

II Pet. 3:1-13.

IN the second epistle of Peter there are some words which strike the ear as strangely pertinent today: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." You need not suppose that the writer of those words knew about atomic energy to say that what he prophesied has now become a present possibility.

No faith is even worth the name unless, while girding man to build for the best, it also gives him strength to ride triumphant through the worst. I believe that such a victory is possible. Four main elements of the faith which gives it power I now set before you.

First, a *God* who can be thwarted but not defeated. Man can go to hell if he wants to, but he cannot pull God down to hell beside him. God can be hurt, he can be delayed; but he cannot be stopped, he cannot be conquered. Righteousness is still at the world's helm. Power mans its engines but love controls its destination.

Second, a *world* which is good but not the final good. God so loved the world that he gave the world his only begotten Son, but God does not lose if he loses the world. Though he be thwarted in the battle of earth, he is not defeated in the war of his ultimate purpose; and mankind, though it be deprived of the good which the earth undeniably is, is not by that fact deprived of the greater good in whose quest the earth itself is no more than a means to an end.

Third, a *human life* which is in the world but not of the world. Every man on earth has a body, and in that sense man is truly in the world; but that which gives to man his special stature under God is not his body but his soul, and the soul is not an earthly thing at all. When our fleshly home is destroyed, we are not killed but evicted. When we reach the end of the earth, we have not reached the end.

(Continued on page 21)

The Prince of Peace

HIS Signature was "Peace." His music came
Echoing down the wave lengths of the earth
That far-off winter night. His given name
Was "Peace." He was the Prince of Peace from birth,
And dying, he left this priceless legacy:
"My peace I leave with you . . ." O blessed Lord,
How we have failed thee, how we have slighted thee,
How often we forget thy gracious word!

We turn to thee, a world confused with strife;
We seek a way that we have lost, somehow;
We need the wisdom that thy birth, thy life,
Thy death should teach us, Lord, we need it now.
Within our hearts may stress and clamor die;
Among the nations may the tumult cease;
May righteousness prevail, all storms pass by:
Speak peace again, O blessed Prince of Peace.

GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

From *Bright Harvest* (Harper, 1952. $1.50).

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By John W. Meister

These practical suggestions will help many preachers in sermon planning

Planning a Year's Sermons

A GOOD sermon may be said to result from the proper mixture of inspiration and perspiration, of flashing insight and arduous toil, of spontaneity and planning. If one of these elements is present at the expense of the other, the sermon is sure to suffer.

Martin Niemöller likes to tell a story about Klaus Harms, the father of the revival in northern Germany. While Dr. Harms was visiting a conference of his fellow ministers, a young member of the group said: "I personally never prepare my sermons, because I am totally sure of my Lord and Savior and of the Holy Spirit and I know that the words will be given me according to the promise." Dr. Harms replied: "I am 75 years old and I have preached for 50 years, but I must confess that all the time I stood in the pulpit not on one single occasion has the Holy Spirit spoken to me one single word. That is, except once. But he spoke to me often as I left the pulpit, and what he said was, 'Klaus, you have been lazy.' "

Our constant quest—whether or not we frame it in these words—is for some technique of planning our pulpit work which will blend in the proper proportion these two elements of method and freedom, of planning and spontaneity. The best technique will permit such a degree of planning that we never feel pushed for something to preach about, never frantically dependent upon sheer inspiration for something to say. At the same time it will allow us every freedom to grab at least a tail feather whenever the angel of inspiration dips near—to use a figure of Oscar Blackwelder's.

Such a technique, then, must include detailed sermon planning well in advance, but always with the mental note that this is, after all, a self-imposed scheme. It is not canonical and it can be changed whenever an outside situation or an inner mood prompts a change.

I have found a workable unit of planning to be the period from October to June or, roughly, from Worldwide Communion Sunday to Pentecost. This allows a feeling of freedom about summer preaching which produces a strange carry-over effect relative to winter preaching. If, for example, I plan a sermon for January and for some reason discard it in favor of another topic, I have the feeling that previous labor was not in vain; I can finish it and preach it in June or July. How egocentric we preachers are and how we hesitate to throw out our brain-children!

The first thing I do is to draw a calendar for this nine-month period on a standard-size sheet of notebook paper. By marking off five vertical columns and nine horizontal columns I have a rectangle about 1" x 2" to represent each of the Sundays. Allotting one month to each of the horizontal columns, I place the date in the upper left-hand corner of each of the rectangles. In the upper right corner of each rectangle I write the liturgical label as well as any special designations such as "Thanksgiving Sunday" or "Reformation Sunday." Now I can *see* at a glance this whole unit of preaching and I have a *feel* for the general sweep and direction the preaching should take. I am now ready to begin the actual planning. My goal is to place in each rectangle this minimum information: (1) a sermon theme or topic; (2) the Scripture passage upon which the sermon will be based; (3) any notes or leading ideas that have come to mind during this initial planning stage.

This lack is not nearly as hard as it may sound. Lent and Advent cry out for series of sermons which will develop an appropriate theme with greater thoroughness than can be accomplished in one sermon. When these two series have been determined we have accounted for a fourth of the Sundays. Special occasions such as Worldwide Communion Sunday, Reformation Day, the Every-Member Canvass and Pentecost indicate themes for several more weeks. Then there is an occasional sermon used another year which we shall want to repeat this year.

Sermon Work Sheets

Now we are ready to fill in the remaining blanks. We find there are only ten to twenty left. If the minister has kept a notebook of sermon ideas he discovers that he has more than enough to preach about, and his task becomes primarily one of sorting and sifting. If he has not jotted down the ideas when they came to mind, then he will have to go to whatever sources are likely to stimulate him.

With this essential information outlined on the calendar, I am now ready to develop a work sheet for each sermon. This means blocking out on a sheet of 8½" x 11" paper a kind of "hotbed" in which the seeds of the sermon can grow during the coming weeks and months. I draw a horizontal line about 2" from the top and a vertical line from that line to the bottom of the page. In the section across the top I copy the information from the calendar plus the complete text. The long area down the left side is for whatever notes and ideas will come to mind which bear some indication of being useful when it is time to prepare the sermon.

(Continued on page 22)

Recessional

Ewing. 7.6.7.6.D.

O Lord, our worship ended,
  Bless us as we depart;
Grant that the vision splendid
  May linger in each heart.
We know ourselves companions
  Of thy diviner soul;
We have thy free bestowal—
  Divided lives made whole.

All that we need thou givest:
  The courage for each day,
The light to shine in darkness,
  The truth to guide our way.
Reveal to us, thy workers,
  Thy dreams for all the earth,
That through our fruitful labors
  Those dreams may here have birth.

Make real in daily living,
  The faith we have confessed,
And then our lives, so human,
  Will be of thee possessed.
We will not fail nor falter,
  However hard the road;
We shall press on undaunted,
  For thou art with us, God.

Bestow on all our moments,
  A meaning that is thine;
Flood all our days with glory,
  That each may be divine.
The hours are swiftly passing,
  The end we all can see;
Untroubled, may we vision
  Our immortality.

HARRY WOODS KIMBALL.

JOHN M. MEISTER served two congregations in his native state of Ohio before going to Fort Wayne, Ind., where he is now minister of the First Presbyterian Church. A graduate of Ohio University and Princeton Theological Seminary, he is active in student work and serves as the chairman of the department of Christian education of the associated churches of Fort Wayne. His articles on church administration have appeared in a number of religious journals.

Sermon Summaries

(Continued from page 19)

Our natural home is with God, and God is eternal.

Fourth, a *Christ* who wore the guise of man but in that guise revealed to man the life of God himself. If Jesus was indeed the Christ, then nothing else really matters. God cares, and God can! We do not have to lose hope. We do not have to be terrified. He who raised his Son from death will raise us too from anything the world can do to us, and no loved one lost to us is truly lost because he still is held within the life of God who never dies.—*Roy M. Pearson, Hancock Congregational, Lexington, Mass.*

Life's Essential

If ye have faith . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you."—Matt. 17:17.

LIFE would be impossible without one essential—faith. As one reads the Gospels one finds a surprising emphasis on belief. Jesus knew that faith is life's essential. He went up and down the land urging men to have faith. That summons runs like a refrain through almost every conversation and incident.

Religion is impossible without faith. It undergirds life with courage and patience with meaning, and brings a man into direct contact with God.

Faith may be described under three categories: choice, acceptance and action. First, choice—choosing whom you will serve. The main question is, What is the object of your faith? In what or in whom do you place your trust? In what do you really believe? The tragedy and difficulty of our world can be explained on the basis of misdirected faith. The pity is that faith is often placed in so many things which are not worthy of man's highest devotion. Christian faith is the right choice of object for your devotion.

Second, acceptance — accepting things as they are. It is the uncomplaining acceptance of the limitations of life. To take life as it is, with all its cruelty, hatred, jealousy, gossip and pettiness, and then to do what you can to make it better and nobler is to demonstrate faith. Reinhold Niebuhr gives us this prayer for good judgment: "O God, give us serenity to accept what cannot be changed; courage to change what can be changed; and the wisdom to know one from the other."

Third, action—the exercise of faith, which gives us the insight that some things can be altered, which without faith would seem entirely impossible. It means to believe in all situations that God is almighty. Faith means action—to take God at his word and do something about it. It is venturing to live according to convictions that can only be verified by trying them at personal risk.

Faith is, then, the choice of the right master in life, the loyalty of the whole person to one object or person. It is acceptance of the world as it is, the recognition of our own limitations, *plus* the conviction that God is all-powerful. This adventurous spirit of action makes it possible to do the seemingly impossible. Faith is the right attitude of man to God, so that God is able to do in and through us things greater than we ask or think. —*Marion de Velder, Hope Church, Holland, Mich.*

On Growing Older

Of white hairs I surely have plenty—
Of the years I have lived it's a proof:
But while fire burns in the furnace,
I don't mind all the snow on the roof.

EVERETT W. LORD.

Nominations for

Pulpit Editorial Associates

(See "For the Record" — Page 31)

To the Pulpit:

In your search for the best contemporary preachers to serve on your board of editorial associates, I nominate the following:

Baptist .....

Church of the Brethren.....

Church of the Nazarene.....

Community .....

Congregational-Christian .....

Disciples .....

Eastern Orthodox .....

Episcopal .....

Evangelical and Reformed.....

Evangelical United Brethren.....

Lutheran .....

Methodist .....

Presbyterian .....

Reformed Church.....

Unitarian .....

Other .....

Africa .....

Asia .....

Australia .....

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Mail nominations before January 15, 1953 to: The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5.

Name .....

Denomination .....

Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'Any Mail Today?'

IT sometimes seems to me that I am on all the sucker lists extant. Scarcely a mail fails to bring me the chance of a lifetime to become rich by buying a thousand shares of Gushing Girlie or Gorgeous Gold. No longer do you need to hunt for access to the ground floor; you are welcomed into the basement with open arms. I have also received no less than three overtures from Mexico with the same "oh please come to my rescue" technique that we used to associate with Spain. All these arrive, I suppose, because I chance to be a member of the throng charitably denominated *homo sapiens*.

But there is an even more regular postal visitor which arrives because I am also *homo clericus*. I have been offered D.D.'s at $25 a D. One bid was more cagey. In case I was already equipped with that Open Sesame to ministerial bliss, I could myself suggest the particular letter to precede the all-important final D.—LL., Litt., Ph., or what have you. My return letter, a typed sermon or prayer-meeting talk (theirs was no degree mill, but an organization that requited real merit and achievement), and my check (or money order) for $50 or $75 (depending on the degree desired) would get prompt results. I suppose these degree machines pay off in real money. Presumably the promoters are not in business for their health and would not continue unless the take kept up to standard. Some years ago, when I asked an acquaintance who was sporting a newly acquired doctorate where he had got it, he mentioned an institution I had never chanced to hear of. In response to my query he replied: "It's a very scientific college; it has the largest lavatory in the whole south."

The articles mentioned in the preceding paragraph may be classed as *hors' d'œuvres* or *apéritifs* on the menus sent to hungry preachers. There are others, as every preacher knows, which justly warrant the description *pièce de résistance*. Need I say that I refer to the steady stream of offers of sermons for every occasion? Actually, this is no stream; it's a deluge. Sometimes it is in the form of a postal card (as in the case of the one before me), sometimes in the form of a more decorously enveloped bid. Here I am offered three volumes (Evangelistic Messages, Pastoral Messages, Special Messages) "at $1.25 per copy, three volumes ONLY $3.00 postpaid." Not only will they enrich me spiritually and save me physically, but they are in "Modern Plastic binding, cover PAJCO LEXIDE." I don't know what PAJCO LEXIDE is—nor apparently do the successors to Webster—but it has the great advantage of "opening flat on Bible stand." Thus I don't need to exhaust myself by transferring these "practical methods of sermonizing" either to my manuscript or to my head. In addition, for $3 more I can have three more volumes of sermons compiled by the same helpful overshepherd from the writings of preachers long dead and securely buried—not only in the earth but in oblivion as well. And to make these sermons obviously my own, if I'll add 50 cents, I can have proof positive of ownership: my "own name stamped in real gold on the cover of each."

This is a good straightforward, no-fooling offer to a man who knows what he needs, intends to get it, and doesn't want any unnecessary palavering. Last year I had a bid which personalized the matter by the use of an individualized letter. To be sure, since the order of my names was reversed and the "t" in the new name was omitted, the salutation beginning "Dear Reverend" was a bit disconcerting. But though the writer may have been a bit weak in spelling he knew, I fear, all our soft spots. He wouldn't presume to think that I couldn't produce powerful sermons—in fact, he was less skeptical at that point than some of the readers of The Pulpit—but he wanted to spare me that I might devote all my consecrated talents to the sacred work of the ministry. In accord with that noble desire he would supply me with 104 sermons on vital themes phrased in a way to bring "a lump in the throat but a glow in the heart" of my people.

The worst of it is, this isn't funny. It is one of the worst scandals of our calling. For these books sell—and by the thousands—and they are not bought to ornament study shelves. They are used every Sunday in thousands of our pulpits. I might even venture further. If the indignant letters which I have received, suggesting that So-and-So's sermon which appeared in such-and-such an issue was a direct steal from one the writer had preached at this-or-that assembly and subsequently published, are any criterion, this practice is not restricted to the boys who purchase the pulps. These letters usually end, "Why don't you do a column on Pulpit Plagiarism? One is sorely needed." I agree that it is. Perhaps I'll attempt one in the future. This is just prolegomena.

Sermon Planning

(Continued from page 20)

Most of the right column will be used for outlining the sermon—connecting lines to be drawn from the various items of collected information and ideas to the appropriate spot in the outline. In the lower right corner I designate a space in which to record books and articles which may well be read in preparation. Each of these work sheets is then placed in a manila folder which is labeled by text or topic—whichever symbol will be used in the permanent file. The manila folders are then placed in a drawer of my desk—and I have, literally at hand, my proposed preaching program for the coming season.

By the time a man has spent this much thought on future sermons he has conditioned his subconscious mind in such a way that he will relate all that he sees, hears, does and reads to his contemplated preaching messages. With a little practice he can cultivate the habit of making notes on his sermon work sheets and of slipping clippings into the sermon folders. When the day comes to put the sermon together he discovers that he has far more material than he can use and that, as a result, his work acquires a new quality of depth and fullness.

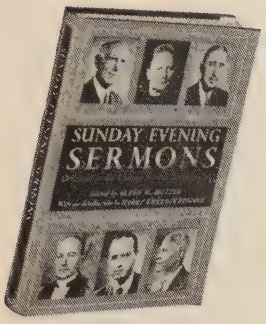
The Sermon Work Week

This technique of planning a year's pulpit work fits well into a sensible schedule for the work week. On Sunday afternoon or early Monday morning I lift out the folder containing the material for next week's sermon and leisurely read through whatever has been collected. The purpose of this reading is simply to refresh my mind and to point up my thinking for the next few days. Between the time of this review and Wednesday morning I complete whatever specific study remains to be done and outline the message. Wednesday is given over to writing the manuscript. From then until Sunday morning the sermon and I have a chance to understand and to become completely identified with each other.

A work schedule that anticipates needs this far in advance has the obvious advantage of relieving almost all sense of pressure. If an emergency prohibits carrying out one stage of the sermonizing process on schedule, the preacher is perfectly aware that ample

(Continued on page 25)

Here it is . . .



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Every minister knows what an honor it is to be asked to speak before this well-known audience. Hence these outstanding preachers have presented sermons of a remarkably high quality. Since this audience consists of a cross-section of the American people in a great metropolitan city, each of these sermons has in common a quality of down-to-earthness and universality. As Dr. Fosdick says of them, "The sermons run snugly close to human need, are relevant to our pressing problems, deal with realistic life situations and bring the Christian gospel to bear on the urgent difficulties of our time."

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *The Living Word in A Dying World*

ALL who were at Hannover for the meeting of the Lutheran World Federation, will long remember its striking theme, "The Living Word in a Responsible Church." But surely none who were there can ever forget their encounter with the Living Word in a Dying World at Hannover.

At Hannover the terrible aspect of the death of grand and beautiful cities was all around. There, too, were the remaining records of the mass destruction of human life. Not far distant lay the scenes of inhuman mass torture and murder. Everywhere, cities, villages and countryside were trying to live saturated with wave after wave of uprooted, homeless humanity. A short distance away they were still coming, stumbling in by the thousands across the border's no man's land. Wives came fleeing without husbands, children without parents, parents with their little ones, sometimes carrying them yet unborn.

If American visitors did not bring with them from home the blindness that easily comes from living in a land abnormally secure for our time, at Hannover they could know that all men live in a world with the seeds of death in it and with the marks of death showing ever more clearly upon it.

The chief thrill of Hannover for those who attended came with the more certain realization that the Living Word in a Responsible Church is man's only hope in a dying world.—*D. F. Putman, President, Central Pennsylvania Synod, United Lutheran Church.*

• *What If Christmas Were Banned?*

HAVE you ever tried to imagine how would you feel if Christmas were banned? With it would go the delightful family "secrets," the excitement of opening Christmas cards and packages from all over the country and world, the nostalgia of old friendships renewed through Christmas notes, the thrill of watching youngsters climb over each other on Christmas morning to see what Santa left, the tender, warm expression of self-giving within the family circle. Think of not being permitted to sing the glorious Christmas carols, of being prevented from sharing in the joyous Christmas parties and festivities which so beautifully enrich the Advent Season. It is unthinkable that any one would want to do away with Christmas, yet back in 1643 that is exactly what happened when England's Roundhead Parliament banned all observance of saints' days and sternly forbade the observance of Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide and stood determined to enforce the ban with troops.

Lest you wonder what was the matter with the British, recall that in 1659 the struggling colony of Massachusetts had a law that "anybody who is found observing, by abstinence from labor, feasting, or in any other way, any such day as Christmas Day, shall pay for every offense five shillings."

The amazing thing is that this happened in Christian lands. But incredible as this may seem, let it be remembered that until Christ came the world never knew Christmas. Whether we are casual or devoted Christians the debt we owe to Christ cannot be expressed in human terms, for even though we may be poor Christians much of the year, at Christmas time we discover how love, kindness and unselfishness become us. Christ must have known our capacities and our ability to become, for the garment of Christmas can fit the human spirit. Thank God that for even a brief few weeks the world can still discover what peace can come to the human heart through men of good will.—*Kenneth A. Carlson, First Methodist, Santa Monica, Calif.*

Pulpit Calendar

Dec. 7—2nd Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 13-20—Hannukah. Feast of Lights. (Jewish)
Dec. 14—3rd Sunday in Advent. Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 15—Bill of Rights Day.
Dec. 21—4th Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 24—Christmas Eve.
Dec. 25—Christmas.
Dec. 28—1st Sunday after Christmas.
Dec. 31—New Year's Eve.
Jan. 1—New Year's Day. Festival of the Christening.
Jan. 4—2nd Sunday after Christmas.
Jan. 4-11—Universal Week of Prayer.
Jan. 6—Epiphany.
Jan. 11—1st Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 18—2nd Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 18-24—Church and Economic Life Week.
Jan. 19—Lee's Birthday.
Jan. 25—The Transfiguration. Conversion of St. Paul.
Jan. 25-Feb. 1—Youth Week.
Feb. 1—4th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 2—Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.
Feb. 8—5th Sunday after Epiphany; Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 15—6th Sunday after Epiphany; Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 18—Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 20—World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 22—1st Sunday in Lent; Brotherhood Sunday.
Mar. 1—2nd Sunday in Lent.

SEASONS: Advent; Christmas; Epiphany; Transfiguration; Lent.

ALTAR COLORS: Advent through Christmas Eve, Violet; Christmas through the Octave of Epiphany, White; Transfiguration, White; Lent, Violet.

(Pulpit Calendar lists date in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

• *Do We Really Want Security?*

THE real measure of how we shall live in a world crisis narrows down to this: What, after all, is so dear and precious to us that we are willing—if need be—to sacrifice our lives for it? Is it merely the right to continue undisturbed in the little niche of life we now occupy? If it is, we are living under a delusion, for there are no safe, secure niches left in our world. Even if there were such security, we would do our souls harm to embrace it. Moses had a safe place in Midian, but he couldn't stay there and still listen to the voice of God. Either he had to respond to that voice or stifle his own soul. He had to choose between living off the fat of the land with his family or sharing manna in the wilderness with the people of Israel.—*Robert D. Brodt, Salem Evangelical and Reformed Church, Allentown, Pa.*

• *Rocks in the Mountain Stream*

THE beauty and health of the mountain stream is produced by the opposition of the rocks in its path. Were there no rocks to oppose the steady flow the stream would lose its beauty and freshness. There would be no foam, no spray, no engaging swirls and ripples, no life giving oxygen for the trout, but only a sullen, flat, unopposed flow of sameness. And though the stream finally wears away the rocks other rocks always take their places.

So in society. Were there no prophets to oppose the stream of public opinion, were there no men who stood firm in their places instead of being carried away as chips on the current, there would be no beauty, no health, no life in nation, church, or mankind. And though the prevailing stream wears away individual men or carries them away in the flood of sudden pressure, other rock-like men will always take their places. The stream may say to the rocks "Get going, move. You are in my way." Society may say to the man "You are different. Change your thoughts or get out." But it is the rocks and the men which give life and vitality to the streams of water and society.—*Graham R. Hodges, First Congregational, Ticonderoga, N. Y.*

Sermon Planning

(Continued from page 22)

time still remains. If he doesn't write the sermon on Wednesday, for example, he can sleep that night for he knows he still has Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

There are several additional advantages to this plan. For example, our secretary normally mimeographs the sermon manuscript in time for distribution the day the sermon is preached. This practice has developed not because we feel the words are so precious that they ought not be lost; rather, we have discovered that many of our people do read the manuscript and, as a result, retain more of the message than they would by simply hearing it. Just as important, many members take the mimeographed sermons to friends who are sick or shut-in. Another by-product is the use to which we put the calendar after the work sheets are completed. The hymns to be used on each Sunday are listed in the lower left-hand corner of the rectangles. The secretary then uses the calendar to develop the weekly bulletins and publicity. She has in one place all the information she needs, with the exception of any last-minute changes.

The greatest advantage of all, of course, is the balance of emphasis that can thus be brought into the pulpit message. If the minister adheres to an official lectionary or even if he follows the liturgical year in a general way, a healthy homiletical balance is virtually assured. If, on the other hand, he chooses to follow a scheme of his own, planning a year's pulpit work in this way forces him to see a season's preaching message as a single unit. If the plan is one-sided in its emphasis or if it omits important facets of the Christian message, he will likely discover its disproportions and bring it into balance.

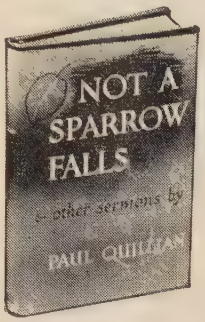
Candles

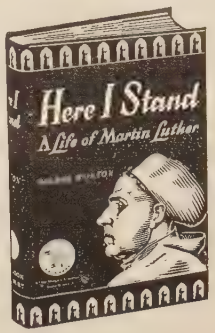
Some folks seem to worry
Because it's dark at night:
Why don't they get a candle,
And send out a little light?

EVERETT W. LORD.

Our preaching must be inspired if it is to have life and warmth and spontaneity. But inspiration is like a rare ore which is mined only with severe difficulty. Once recognized, it is found to be mixed with useless substances that can be separated from the precious ore only by prayerful, skillful and patient labor. A technique such as the one outlined here allows ample opportunity for the preacher to discover the deposits of genuine inspiration. At the same time, it encourages him to do his best to present himself to God "as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

To Own ★ To Use ★ To Give





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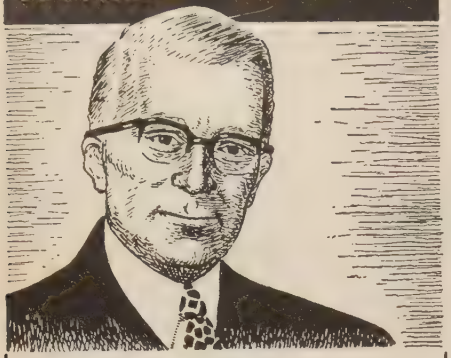

Have you ever thought of the strange and checkered history of words? Once highly regarded and associated with the best people, a term can fall into bad company and never regain its reputation.

"Distinction" once carried a high bred air but now it has fallen into disrepute.

"Discrimination" could assume the place made vacant by "distinction". To be called "discriminating" is to be numbered among the elect. Every heart beats to that phrase and there are good reasons for the satisfaction enjoyed by this tribute.

But when it comes to a certain kind of high-pressure ballyhoo, the discriminating prospect is forgotten or ignored. Advertising involves the gentle art of persuasion. The good propagandist avoids violence and noise as if it were a fatal disease. Yet the shouting and din employed to force embryo buyers to lose their heads enjoys a disturbing popularity.

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Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Ministers of Music

REGARDLESS of how well trained a minister of music may be in his subject matter, despite his knowledge of the history of music, his intimacy with the classics and his minute understanding of every major and minor theme of every symphony or concerto—unless he knows people, his object matter, he is not prepared to offer any organization a well balanced program of music.

Seminaries were a long time waking up to this fact. Courses in pastoral theology, pastor psychology and how to understand people are of fairly recent origin. Conservatories and advanced schools of music have yet to fall in line. The pursuit of "art for art's sake" sounds pious, but is ridiculous. Art as we know it has been the creation of imperfect people to give other imperfect people a field for self-expression. Two imperfections never add to up a perfect art. For every artist who loves music for its own sake and devotes time and talent pursuing artistic perfection, there are dozens who will have to spend their lives working with people.

Working with People

And when a musician who is a perfectionist clashes with ordinary people who aren't, something is bound to happen. Usually the people throw up their hands in disgust and despair, or the musician leaves, muttering some unkind words about the "common horde," the "unappreciative bourgeois" or "cheap *hoi polloi.*" The minister of music would be making a wise investment of time and would acquire a liberal education in psychology, psychiatry and the kindred sciences if he (or she) spent a few days every month in pastoral visitation with the minister. Seeing people in their joys and sorrows, triumphs and tragedies, temptations and struggles, makes one more appreciative and far less critical of the kind of music that seems to feed their souls, comfort them in sorrow and strengthen them in weakness, as well as bolster them in times of grave doubt.

Let the professional musician, skilled at the console and burning with the desire to raise the musical standards of his people, sit at the bedside of an aged saint who is hovering between life and death. Let him listen closely as one on the brink of the other world hums the strains of a familiar hymn or song. Let him notice the calm that comes to a troubled heart, the ease that takes the place of tension, the assurance that replaces doubt. He will learn that people seldom die to the strains of the "Hallelujah Chorus" or Haydn's *Creation.* More often the last strains they utter are from a simple song or hymn which the intellectuals have denounced and the critics decried. The trouble is, the critics know too much about their *subject* and too little about their *object.*

Musical Teamwork

Music does not exist primarily for its own sake, but for the sake of those who are to experience it. Some of the Psalms are by no stretch of the imagination profound pieces of poetry, and the music to which they were sung could not have been too far superior to the words; but they nerved many an early Christian facing a martyr's death. Their real worth can never be realized apart from the people to whom they were precious. So with anthems, hymns, songs and oratorios. Seen by themselves, dissected by the scientist's scalpel, examined under the critic's microscope, some of them are inane and trite, practically devoid of any lasting qualities. But mirrored in the lives of those who have lived and died by them, they take on new life and reflect added glory.

So let the musician's education include participation in many of the activities involving people, ordinary, everyday, hard-working people. Let him share in some of the pastoral counseling, child guidance and parent education. Let him serve his internship learning to know people, and it will color and mellow his attitudes for the rest of his life.

And it follows that the minister, to be understanding and sympathetic, must learn to appreciate the musician's subject to the degree that he expects the musician to understand his, the minister's, subject. Fortunate indeed is the pastor with such a musician and the musician with such a pastor. Few and far between are such ideal relationships. That is all the more reason why churches should hold it before them as a goal.

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Adams, Hampton: Eternity in the Heart (Aug.)

Austin, Eugene M.: The Peril of Conformity (Oct.)

Barnett, Albert E.: Religion and the Needs of Men (Mar.)

Berg, Darrel: The Ring, the Robe and the Shoes (June)

Booth, John N.: What Has Happened to America's Conscience? (Nov.)

Bowles, Charles P.: The Tradition of the Fathers (Apr.)

Cully, Kendig B.: Being Christians Today (Nov.)

Dowdy, R. Edward: Christian Labor Relations (Sept.)

Edwards, K. Morgan: Letters of Recommendation (Nov.)

Fetter, C. Willard: Unfavorable Winds (Sept.)

Gilmour, S. MacLean: The Christ—The Son of the Living God (Apr.)

Graham, R. W.: Unpurchasable Men (Aug.)

Gresham, Perry E.: Red Skies in the Evening (Aug.)

Hill, William S.: When Life's Foundations Are Shaken (Dec.)

Holmes, Kenneth L.: A Sermon for Fathers (June)

Hudnut, William H., Jr.: The Kindled Heart (July)

Hudson, Thomas Franklyn: The Haunted Man (Dec.)

Hunter, Allan A.: Let No Uncertain Trumpet Sound—For Peace! (Jan.)

James, F. N.: God Intervenes in Life (Nov.)

Jones, G. Curtis: Hours and Wages (Aug.)

Kahn, Robert I.: Gossip: Minor Sin or Major Vice? (Mar.)

Knapp, G. Edward: Resolutions Versus Revolutions (Dec.)

Lathrop, John H.: Who Is Satan? (July)

Lewis, Olin A.: God and Nature (July)

Loper, Vere V.: The Christian View of Sex (June)

Lorenz, William G.: The Man by the Side of the Road (Sept.)

Luchs, Fred E.: The Evil That God Can Do (June)

Lunger, Harold L.: There's No Place Like Home (May); Human Destiny (Aug.)

Macleod, Donald: Heritage (July)

McClure, Robert B.: Global Thinking for World Citizenship (Nov.)

Meek, Frederick M.: Christian Maturity in Days Like These (Feb.); No Pessimism about Protestantism (Oct.)

Mellin, Willard C.: The Protestant Church and Labor (Sept.)

Nasby, A. Gordon: The Known God (Dec.)

Peabody, Stephen C.: Managing Our Fears and Anxieties (May)

Pearson, Roy M.: What About an Ambassador to the Vatican? (Feb.)

Pope, Liston: Jesus Took a Towel (Apr.)

Ray, George McN.: On Being Rich in Mercy (Jan.); The Resurrection Truth (Apr.)

Riemann, R. G.: 'Here I Stand' (Oct.)

Schroeder, Frederick W.: Perspective from the Sanctuary (July)

Sloan, Harry P.: Believe or Perish (July)

Smith, Herbert Booth: The Tragedy of Indifference (Dec.)

Steeves, Francis K.: Mercy for the Mentally Ill (May)

Straton, Hillyer, H.: The Problem of My Guilt (Mar.)

Stuber, Stanley I.: 'And Light Is Good' (Sept.)

Swan, Alfred W.: The House of Amity (Jan.); Christ's Call to Youth (June)

Taylor, Gardner C.: They Shall Ask the Way (Feb.)

Taylor, Harry M.: Dangers of Socialism (Apr.)

Theis, Edouard: The Stubborn Widow (June)

Trousdale, Whitney M.: Four Roads to a Vital Faith (Mar.)

Trueblood, Elton: The Christian Counter-Revolution (Feb.)

Turk, Paul E.: Christians and the Lord's Day (Sept.)

Turner, Herman L.: I Believe in the Christian Home (May)

Valbrecht, Louis H.: What Is the Holy Catholic Church? (Oct.)

Wagner, O. Walter: Christ's Authority in Current Conflicts (Jan.)

Weiskotten, Robert F.: The Cross—Conscience for the World (Mar.)

Westhafer, W. James: Convention Time for Christ (Oct.)

Wheeler, J. Clyde: When Sorrow Comes (Oct.)

Wright, Bert: The Divine Shoemaker (Sept.)

Zearfoss, Robert N.: How Thick Is Your Skin? (Feb.)

Zimmerman, Fred: The Amazement of Pentecost (May)

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Davis, Lewis H.: Asking Little and Giving Much (Mar.)

Lankler, Ralph C.: A Church in a Prison (Apr.); The Church Is Like a Wheel (Oct.); Cows Need Fences, But Do You? (Jan.); What Did You Get *From* Christmas? (Dec.)

Lunger, Harold L.: The Art of Living Together (Sept.)

Schott, John: Clean Hands and a Pure Heart (Aug.); True and Lasting Love (Nov.)

Simms, Donald, Jr.: Three Little Pigs (June)

Van Ornum, Carlton: The Proud Peacock (July)

Whyte, Lloyd N.: Relay Stations (Feb.)

Zearfoss, Robert N.: The Impatient Grapevine (May)

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Clark, Thomas Curtis: Prayer for the Church (Beaufort) (June)

Emurin, Ernest K.: We Dedicate This Temple (Aurelia) (Aug.); Thy Word, O Lord, Unto Our Feet (Sept.)

Hauenstein, John C.: Our Mission in Prospect (Joanna) (Nov.)

Hudnut, Herbert B.: International Hymn (Hymn to Joy) (Aug.)

Kimball, Harry Woods: Recessional (Ewing) (Dec.)

Piety, Chauncey R.: Arise, O Church of God (St. Peter) (May); The Christ of God (Londonderry) (Oct.)

Rupert, Hoover: Palm Sunday (Materna) (Apr.); Easter (St. Agnes) (Apr.)

Shackford, John W.: An Easter Hymn (Apr.)

Wester, Jesse M.: O Church of God, Lift Up Thy Voice (St. Anne) (Jan.)

Pastoral Prayers

Clark, Thomas C. (Jan.)

Cummings, Oliver de W. (Apr.)

Fetter, C. Willard (May)

Gates, John P. (July)

Hahn, Herbert W. (Feb.)

Hertz, Richard C. (July)

Hudnut, Herbert B. (Mar.)

Johnson, Alvin D. (May)

Kissling, Albert J. (Nov.)

MacDonald, Rosmond M. (Feb.)

McDowell, A. G. (Aug.)

Perkins, James C. (Sept.)

Sutton, Ralph (Jan.)

Trembath, William Carman (Dec.)

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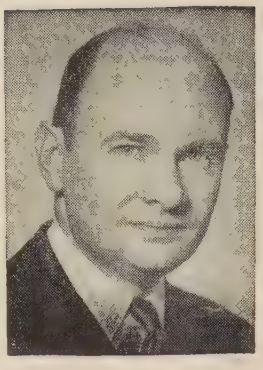

Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

The Bible in the Liturgy

LAST MONTH we raised the question of the place that Holy Scripture occupies in the liturgy. This is a pertinent question because of the recent publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. In opening the subject we discussed the use of the Psalter during public worship.

The liturgy is filled with scriptural references from beginning to end. Start with the call to worship or the processional hymn. The words of both are likely to be based on a biblical passage. Move from the opening note of the service to the anthem of adoration and again you are likely to find a biblical text from one of the psalms of praise or one of the doxologies of Revelation. Then there are responsive readings, prayers that are saturated with scriptural phrases, the reading of the Bible itself, additional hymns, and the sermon based on a biblical text and filled with scriptural references. In closing, the words of the benediction, often from one of the Pauline letters, are heard.

In considering the place of the Bible in the liturgy, this specific question needs to be asked: Should a parish church follow a given lectionary in its service?

The older churches have made a strong case for the lectionary. In Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran churches the lessons for each of the Sundays of the church year are definitely prescribed. From them, the theme of the morning is taken. There is, of course, some freedom in the use of these lectionaries because sometimes the lesson for Evening Prayer may be read at the time of matins and, of course, within the lesson there are several texts which may be selected for the sermon. Some good things may be said for the use of the lectionary. It does guarantee a spread of interest during the course of the year. The pastor is not likely to ride a hobby if his lessons and sermon themes are already chosen for him. Nor will he so easily go off on a secular tangent if the sermon of the day calls for a topic based upon a prescribed lesson. Furthermore, the lectionary covers the entire liturgical year. It makes possible the scriptural development of that year from Advent through the other seasons, thus securing dramatic movement and interest.

These lectionaries are now available not only for the liturgical churches of the older traditions but also for the free churches. In the new Methodist *Book of Worship*, for example, on page 209, there is a calendar and lectionary for the Christian year which offers two lessons for each Sunday, the second lesson always being the Gospel. The new *Book of Worship for the Congregational and Christian Churches*, on page 403, offers an even more extensive lectionary which runs for two years. For each Sunday four lessons are offered: a psalm, an Old Testament passage, the Gospel and the Epistle. This offers quite a spread of preaching opportunity because a man is likely to find a suitable text in one of the four lessons.

Along this line, Friedrick Rest has written a book, *Worship Aids for 52 Sundays* (Westminster Press, 1951), in which he sets forth a number of worship aids for each of the 52 Sundays of the church year. Included in these aids are Scripture selections which form a complete lectionary for the year. Instead of a single lectionary, however, he gives for each Sunday a number of possible selections taken from the various lectionaries of the church, including the ancient selections of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, lections from the *Book of Common Order* of the Church of Scotland, together with lections from the Thomasius lectionary, the Eisenach selections and other readings rendered by such churchmen as Frederic Soll. Such aid is very suggestive to the pastor planning his lessons and sermons and offers a variety of possibilities, but can hardly be said to be a stated lectionary.

It must be confessed, however, that sometimes the things in a lectionary become antiquated.

Certainly the average pastor and parish in the free church tradition are not ready for a lectionary. If preaching is to be prophetic it must be free. Furthermore, there are many people who do not want to become cogs in the wheel of dull conformity and repetition which a lectionary may force upon them. They know this is not the way to create freedom of expression in any religion. Because they are free, they want a preacher prophetically to interpret religion day by day in terms of their immediate living experience.

Preachers in Print

The Interpreter's Bible

WHEN church historians evaluate the significant events of 1952, it is safe to say that the publication of the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible (Nelson, buckram $6; leather, $10) will stand near the top of the list. The preacher's effective use of the R.S.V. in the pulpit was suggested last month in these pages by one of our younger Bible scholars.

While few pastors will be indifferent to the coming of a new Bible translation, it is conceivable that many may overlook another publication which also made its appearance during the year. I refer, of course, to ★★★★*The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols., Abingdon-Cokesbury, $8.75 per vol. if ordered separately; special rate in standing order plan). The Pulpit's esteemed editor, Charles Clayton Morrison, reviewed Volume VII (the first volume to be published) in the "Book of the Month" section of his page in our November 1951 issue.

Volume VII included general articles on the New Testament and Matthew and Mark. Since then Volume VIII has appeared, which covered Luke and John. Now, with the publication of the R.S.V. of the Old Testament, Volume I has come from the presses. It is a mammoth book, filling 1,100 pages, nearly one-half of which are devoted to 22 general articles on the Bible and Old Testament background. The rest form the commentary on Genesis and Exodus.

Pastors and students will find the introductory articles of Volume I covering the whole gamut of subjects found normally in the biblical department of a theological seminary. Indeed reading these treatments would be one sure way for many pastors to bring their seminary studies up to date.

Most readers will have an immediate interest in the "working page" of the commentary. This consists of the Scripture in both the King James and Revised Standard versions printed at the top of the page in parallel columns, which makes for quick comparisons; the exegesis, which attempts to give the total setting for the Scripture; and the expositions, which, in the words of George A. Buttrick, the commentary editor for the series, "point a path rather than impose a pattern. They are not a crutch, but a spur."

A large number of maps are also included, and Volume XII will contain three extensive indexes on general subjects, scriptural passages and illustrations which will be of invaluable assistance in sermon preparation.

The entire series, to contain some 8 million words, will have 124 contributors who represent the biblical and homiletical leadership of our time. Among the one-third of the contributors whose articles or sermons have appeared in The Pulpit is our intriguing columnist, Morton S. Enslin, who contributes a general article on Palestine in New Testament times. Charles Clayton Morrison served as one of the 36 consulting editors who assisted in guiding the initial steps.

This commentary will undoubtedly be a landmark in the field of biblical scholarship. Nothing like it has appeared in the English language for at least 50 years. Nor, in all probability, will anything similar be attempted in another half-century. This means that the preacher of today stands at a strategic point. He has just received a new version of the Bible in the R S V. With it he now has an added tool, *The Interpreter's Bible*—so called because of Bunyan's inspired record where Christian, in the "Interpreter's House," learned the deeper meanings of the gospel. No modern preacher should try to fulfill his homiletical task without the aid of these volumes, for, as Dr. Buttrick writes in the introduction to Volume I, "The Bible is not a series of phonograph records traced on helpless human wax by a compulsive needle, but genuinely an inspiration from which new light breaks age on age under the leadings of the Spirit of Christ." Here is the preacher's channel for *more light!*

ALTON M. MOTTER.

ROUNDUP

THE WILL TO LIVE. By **Arnold A. Hutschnecker, M.D.** Crowell, $3.50. In reading Dr. Hutschnecker's book I had, for the first time, the feeling that Schopenhauer, Freud, Weatherhead and modern psychosomatic medicine fit together in the same world of philosophy, psychology, religion and medicine. The book is primarily a series of case studies of the causes of mental and emotional illness. It stresses the fact that both psychological and philosophical will power play a major role in the physiological health of the body. The book is loaded with the kind of material that preachers should be using for sermons instead of the vague analogies which so often form the illustrative material of sermons. The author sets forth his thesis in the simple, accurate English of a man who has had scientific training, yet enough wisdom to avoid terms too technical for the average reader. His book is not only designed for the medical student but is definitely a tool for the pastoral counselor and the preacher.—*Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

★★GOD SO LOVED. By **Walter Barlow.** Revell, $2.00. Ministers who are casting about for homiletical themes of real doctrinal significance will be glad to get this book. Written against a background of rich teaching experience and expressing the deep conviction which is characteristic of the author and which has given effectiveness to all his work, this book is a wholesome corrective to an apologetic attitude regarding evangelism. Dr. Barlow emphasizes that "it was in the very nature of God that he should give himself to save his children from their sins," and that this was the primary mission of Jesus. The proclamation of this truth *is* the gospel. There are at least six great preaching themes suggested by this book.—*Joseph S. Johnston, Epworth Methodist, Norfolk, Va.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No Star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

An analysis based on reports from leading religious booksellers and from the reading of the Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.

October	November	This Month	
7	3	1	**Marching Off the Map.** *Halford E. Luccock. Harper,* $2.50
3	4	2	**Go Inquire of the Lord.** *Gerald Kennedy. Harper,* $1.50
	8	3	**An Autobiography of Prayer.** *Albert E. Day. Harper,* $2.50
1	2	4	**A Protestant Manifesto.** *Winfred E. Garrison. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $2.75
4	5	5	**The Church Militant.** *Harold A. Bosley. Harper,* $2.00
8	6	6	**Questions People Ask.** *Robert J. McCracken. Harper,* $2.50
	9	7	**This Is the Church.** *Anders Nygren. Muhlenberg,* $4.75
	10	8	**Rediscovering Jesus.** *Jack Finegan. Association Press,* $2.50
		9	**Your God Is Too Small.** *J. B. Phillips. Macmillan,* $1.75
		10	**The Age of Terror.** *S. C. Neill. Harper,* $2.00

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

WITH the election of General Eisenhower, millions of American citizens—those born since, say, the First World War—will, next January, look upon what to them is an unfamiliar picture in Washington. To their elders this election will seem like a day of resurrection, but to them it will seem as if a new political party had been born. And, indeed, it will be a new party. The new administration cannot begin at the point where the last Republican administration left off. Great changes have taken place since 1932—radical social innovations, a second world war, a third war still being waged, a terrifying national debt, unprecedented taxation, the assumption of illimitable responsibilities all around the world, an economy of apparent prosperity supported by a deflated currency, and a changed attitude toward America in world opinion. There will be little in the older tradition of Republicanism to guide the administration. Can we predict the course it will take? I venture one prediction. It will follow a policy of stabilization in contrast with the past policy of innovation. And this I believe is what our country most needs. I would call it a "conservative" policy except for the popular perversion of that good word to mean "reactionism." My hope is that we are entering upon a regime of constructive stabilization which will conserve the acknowledged gains of the past and relieve the acute tension to which the public mind has long been subjected by the uncertainties of innovation. We may hope that the nation has found in General Eisenhower a President whose steady temperament and sturdy character will command the people's confidence in a degree that will rank him among our ablest Presidents.

New President, New Party

The Book of the Month

WHAT PRESENT-DAY THEOLOGIANS ARE THINKING. *By Daniel Day Williams. Harper, $2.00.*

WE ARE in the midst of a theological revolution or, in Dr. Williams' term, a "theological renaissance." I emphasize the revolutionary aspect of this renaissance because I hear so much preaching that seems to be wholly unaware that Christian thought is experiencing a new birth. Much of our preaching continues to reflect the naive liberalism of a generation ago. I commend this book heartily as an opening of the door into a new-old way of thinking about the Christian faith. Dr. Williams clearly sees that modern theology is taking us beyond the liberalism of yesterday and also beyond the older tradition of rigid orthodoxy. He introduces us to the way present-day theologians are thinking on four subjects—the Bible, Christian social ethics, Jesus Christ, and the Christian church. We become acquainted with the outstanding minds whose thought is re-creating the historical evangelical gospel proclaimed by the early church, interpreted in the New Testament and never wholly lost. Dr. Williams weaves into his account just enough interpretation of his own to make it read almost like a story. At the end you will feel that you have had a theological education and are ready to receive your degree!

A Thought for the Month

ONE of the hardest things for modern man to accept is the Christian claim that once, and once for all, at a definite moment in the distant past, there emerged the ultimate criterion by which all history and all human achievement is evermore to be judged. Yet Christianity makes no less a claim for the historical person of Jesus Christ. The unwillingness to accept this claim arises from our pride in the possession of a vast body of knowledge unknown to the ancients. Our salvation, it is assumed, will be found in present knowledge, not in past history. The fallacy here, I believe, lies in the modern way of thinking of history as a long line of upward progress. In this view, we stand at the pinnacle of history, and from our proud eminence we are able to pronounce judgments on the past. The idea that we are to be judged by a criterion that emerged in the distant past is repellent and humiliating. But modern man is deceived by his obsession with a linear conception of a progressive historical ascent. It would be truer to conceive history, not as a line, but as a vast plane upon which human life deploys itself in all directions away from and toward a center. The historical process would then be envisaged, not as an ascent, but as an approach to the center or a wandering away from it. The character of a civilization would be judged by its distance from the center—far away would be marked by chaos, suffering, war; near by would be known by order, happiness, justice. Where, then, would be the center? As Christians we are left in no doubt. Its precise location is marked by the historical figure of Jesus Christ in whom the living God unveiled his will and his character with irresistible authenticity. "I," said Jesus, "if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me!"

The Christian Way to Think of History

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

BACK in 1950 when the make-up and format of The Pulpit were changed to accommodate the new features and columns with which you are now very familiar, the Christian Century Foundation asked your help in selecting editorial associates. "Who," we asked, "are the preachers of the present generation who stand out as most representative of the best in contemporary preaching? Who are the men scattered throughout Protestantism in every section of the country who are recognized as having a special message and special ability to draw people to hear that message? Who are the pace-setters among America's more than 100,000 Protestant clergymen?"

To find out who these men were was not an easy task. Letters, telephone calls and personal interviews with denominational and interdenominational leaders and fellow pastors finally enabled us to select 33 editorial associates who we felt were qualified to represent the best in American preaching.

In the fall of 1951 our readers almost unanimously renominated the same group for another year of service. Without exception the Christian Century Foundation accepted the nominations our readers gave us. This year, however, we feel that the time has come to make a much wider survey to find out if there are other men who belong among these editorial associates whose names are not now on our masthead. We again turn to you, the readers, to ask your help. We want you to suggest names that should be placed on a ballot which we will publish in The Pulpit in March. Every preacher who receives at least 10 recommendations will be included on the ballot which we will publish at that time.

So, brother pastor, take another look at the masthead on page 31 and let us know whether you believe there is another name that should be there. Use the form on page 21, drop us a postcard, write us a letter, or wire your nomination to The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5.

There have been other lists of representative contemporary American preachers compiled in the past. The criticism of such lists has usually been that only a few denominations or preachers in the heavily populated eastern seaboard and north central sections of the country had a chance for inclusion. No one has been able to say this of The Pulpit's list of editorial associates. Still, we recognize that it is not an infallible list and that each year sees the emergence of new names and new faces among the recognized leaders in American preaching. We want to keep our list up to date. You—our *real* editors—are the only ones who can help us do this. Send us your nominations by January 15, if possible.

G.E.H.

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A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Founded 1929

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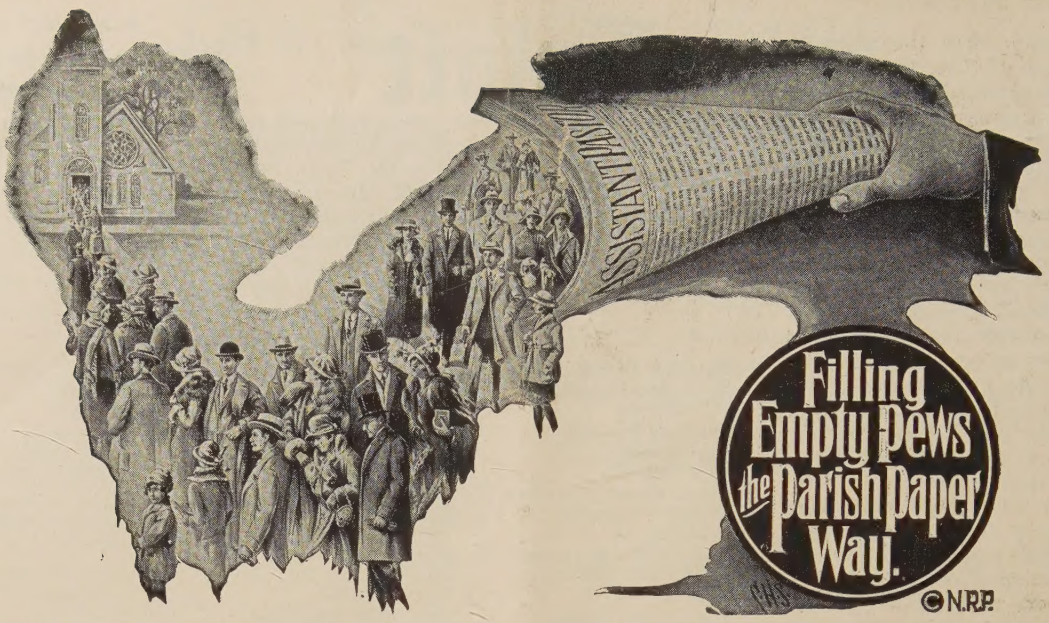

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